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Princeton University.

"Sir," said DR. JOHNSON, "let us take a walk down Fleet Street."

TEMPLE BAR

A London Magazine

FOR TOWN AND COUNTRY READERS.

CONDUCTED BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA,

AUTHOR OF "TWICE ROUND THE CLOCK," "WILLIAM HOGARTH," "GASLIGHT AND
DAYLIGHT," "BADDINGTON PEERAGE," ETC.

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(vol. 2)



PREFACE.

NEXT to the delightful task of returning thanks for the presentation of a piece of plate, should surely be reckoned the duty of writing a Preface for every succeeding volume of a prosperous Magazine. The sight of so many solid ounces of silver,—to say nothing of their “fashion,”—which, when the speech-making is over, you are entitled to carry away in a cab, or, if you choose to be economical, give a boy sixpence to carry home for you, might naturally be supposed to be favourable to the development of what eloquence may be latent within us. Yet some of the very stupidest speeches on record have been delivered over votive epergnes and complimentary candelabra. So, too, may it be with preface-writing. If this were the first volume of *TEMPLE BAR*, I might have—as I have had—something pertinent to say. If this were to be the last volume, there would be scope and verge enough for apathetic wail, and a savage fling at competitors who had passed us in the race. But as this brief address is only the second of a series which I trust will be prolonged to at least the length of the line of looking-glass kings in *Macbeth*, I feel somewhat barren of matter on which to descant, or to which my readers would listen with patience. Reverting for an instant to the plate-topic, I may recall the old anecdote of the popular but taciturn commander of a regiment who was presented by the major, on the part of the officers generally, with a handsome vase. Now the major happened to be a man of as few words as his colonel. “There’s the jug,” he simply said, pushing it across the table to his commanding-officer. The colonel took the glittering gift in his hand, inspected it approvingly, and, for all thanks, remarked, “Is this the mug?” And every body was satisfied with the speeches on both sides. How would it be if, in lieu of covering a couple of pages with idle words, I were succinctly to say, “This is the Preface to the Second Volume of *TEMPLE BAR*; and as you like the show, so I hope you will speak of it.” My task could be thus with ease accomplished; but the public might not be entirely satisfied with my brevity, and, in a spirit quite dissimilar to the colonel already mentioned, might ask, “Is this your Preface, quotha?”

Perhaps the best plan, after all, to adopt, would be to inform all our

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ANNEX A

kind friends and patrons that TEMPLE BAR is getting on very well indeed, and that we have every reason to be satisfied with our success. The old structure from which our name is taken is, indeed, menaced with demolition at no distant date. When that new palace of justice comes to be erected between Carey Street and St. Clement's, it will be vain, perhaps, to hope for the continuance of Temple Bar. It will go the way of Ludgate and Holbein's Gate, of London Wall and Old London Bridge. The barber will have to find another sanctuary for easy-shaving, and the banker's books a new storehouse. But the name will remain in the memory of the old days. A model of the Bar in Brown Windsor soap already graces a perfumer's window in the Strand; and we see no reason why we should not endeavour to raise an enduring monument to the Bar on mauve-coloured paper.

With respect to the contents of the Magazine, the verdict of the majority of my readers has—"errors excepted," as the bills of cost say—given me no cause to despond. Of course we mean to do better than we have yet done;—is not a photograph better than a daguerreotype? is not a pocket-siphonia better than a macintosh? is not a Colt's revolver better than a horse-pistol? and an Enfield rifle better than a Minié?—of course we mean improvement, progress, and so forth; but when the public has already cried "Well done" to our earlier efforts, some little degree of sanguine hope may be indulged in that future opinions may be even yet more favourable.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

*Upton Court, Bucks,
July 1861.*

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A Haunted Life	413
A Jovial Bishop	178
A Nation of Marksmen	112
A Word to Women	54
American Hotels and American Food	345
ANCIENT CLASSICAL NOVELISTS :	
Part III. Iamblichus, and Xenophon the Ephesian	357
Berkeleigh, Elizabeth, Margravine of Anspach	241
Broad-awake	188
Burg-keeper's Secret, The	450
Chalk	465
Clouds	230
Colonel Bowie and his Knife	120
Curious Cases, Some	131
DAUGHTERS OF EVE :	
II. Elizabeth Berkeleigh, Margravine of Anspach	241
First-Fiddles and Top-Sawyers	404
FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE—A Romance :	
Chapter XIII.	62
XIV.	69
XV.	74
XVI.	204
XVII.	214
XVIII.	219
XIX.	380
XX.	385
XXI.	387
XXII.	391
XXIII.	393
XXIV.	396
XXV.	398
XXVI.	401
XXVII.	520
XXVIII.	522
XXIX.	527
XXX.	533
XXXI.	537
XXXII.	539
XXXIII.	543
From Generation to Generation	101
Haunted Life, A	413
Holy Mr. Herbert	475

	PAGE
Iamblichus, and Xenophon the Ephesian	357
In Loco Parentis	557
In the Temple Gardens	276
John's Wife	254
Jovial Bishop, A	178
LONDON POEMS :	
V. Belgravia	225
VI. A City Preacher	516
My Aunt and I	333
Nation of Marksmen, A	112
Nigger, The Real and the Conventional	196
Of the Mountebank Family	504
On Quacks	268
POEMS :	
Abandonata	141
After Long Years	432
After Three Days	566
Aged Forty	472
Amy	330
Belgravia	225
City Preacher, A	516
Dead Baby, The	372
Herodias	50
Three Times	288
"Provincial Letters" of Pascal, The	89
Quacks, On	268
Rabelais, François	390
Real and the Conventional Nigger, The	196
Scribe, Eugène	40
SEVEN SONS OF MAMMON, THE :	
Chapter X. An exceedingly vulgar Person	9
XI. In which the Curate goes to London	19
XII. No Science to Mr. Sims is a Mystery	33
XIII. Embarrassments of a rich young Man	145
XIV. Mrs. Armytage's Impulse	157
XV. Quis custodiet ipsos Custodes ?	170
XVI. Mrs. Caesar Donkin	289
XVII. The Sexagenarians	297
XVIII. Eve of the Deluge	314
XIX. Down among the Bad Men	433
XX. Sister Marie des Douleurs	444
Some Curious Cases	131
Spell-bound	490
Told at Frascati	547
Word to Women, A	54

TEMPLE BAR.

APRIL 1861.

The Seven Sons of Mammon.

A STORY.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

CHAPTER X.

AN EXCEEDINGLY VULGAR PERSON.

WHAT is a gentleman? Who is a gentleman? I pause for a reply. Of course there will be at once as many score thousand answers, indignant, sarcastic, explanatory, and argumentative, to my queries as there are readers to this story. But I must repeat them nevertheless. "What is a gentleman? and who, if you please, has a right to be considered one?" Maginn once, discussing the vexed question, quoted an Irish authority, who laid it down that for duelling purposes any one might be considered a gentleman who wore a clean shirt once a week. The present generation is more fastidious, and would not be satisfied with such a standard of gentility. The Byronic idea of a gentleman we are all familiar with: small hands and feet, a high forehead (warranted alabaster), curly hair, and a fine taste for hock and soda-water in the morning; but when we find a being so endowed squabbling with his wife, recommending Mr. Grimaldi the clown to take soy with his apple-tart, and composing a scurril poem under the inspiration of diluted gin and not hock, one begins to doubt somewhat of the correctness of the Byronic theory. It is plain, I am afraid, that manners have little to do with making a gentleman—in the world's sense of the term. The Plantagenets ate their meals with their fingers, slept on straw, and did not use pocket-handkerchiefs; and Charlemagne, not being able to write, was compelled to dip the forefinger of his glove in ink and smear it over the parchment, when it was necessary that the imperial sign-manual should be affixed to an edict.

Imagine "Carolus Magnus X his mark"! The best-bred men of modern times have often been of the most plebeian extraction. The French Duke de Noailles-Noailles confessed that the dancing-master Vestris, if his demeanour was to be taken as a criterion, was the most polished gentleman he ever saw; whereas, *per contra*, read what St. Simon has to say of the bearish and brutish manners of the great Dukes and Peers of his time. Brummell, the pattern of English patricians, was the son of a petty lodging-house keeper, and the grandson of a menial servant;—if he ever had a grandfather at all. Again, as to appearance. Take down your Lavater's Physiognomy, and, placing your hand over the names appended to the portraits, just strive by guess-work to determine who are the nobly-descended and who the base-born in that long panorama of faces. Long odds may be laid that when you come to remove your hand, you will discover that this eagle-nosed, lofty-browed worthy, who by his countenance should be of the bluest blood of Castile, is the son of a cobbler, and that this bull-necked, snub-nosed, thick-lipped, clod-hopping-looking fellow is a grandee of a hundred quarterings, or a prince of an imperial house. Now, do you think I am about to launch into some hotly democratic invective against the folly and fallacy of claims of long descent; that I am about to quote the "grand old gardener and his wife;" or ask, with Wat Tyler's crew, who was a gentleman when the gardener delved and his wife span; or chuckle over the ambassador-poet's proposed epitaph:

"Ladies and gentles, by your leave,
Here lies the body of Matthew Prior;
The son of Adam and of Eve:
Can Bourbon or Nassau go higher?"

No: I have not any wish to attempt sarcasm either one way or the other—either a bout "tenth transmitters of foolish faces," or poor varlets whose blood "has crept through scoundrels ever since the Flood." Blood, quotha! If I am pricked, will not my veins yield the life current; and if I choose to wear blue spectacles, may I not declare it to be the real tap—the genuine *sangre azul*? Blood, forsooth! What are your two-penny-halfpenny Howards and Percys to *my* ancestry,—to yours, my descendant of five hundred cattle-lifters,—to yours, Fitz Bogie designed of Macgillicuddy; to yours, M. de Sidonia, who carry three trumpets proper in memory of your ancestor who helped to blow the walls of Jericho down? and what are all our boastings of ancient descent compared with those of the Chuggs of Suffolk, who have held the plough and cracked the clods for twice five hundred years. Let us all be proud of our progenitors, and think ourselves each and severally the very finest gentlemen that ever stepped; and when a rude person says, "Sir, you are no gentleman," let us answer him, "Sir, you are no judge."

And yet: Who is a gentleman? What is a gentleman? The question is as far from solution as ever. I don't know, for one; but if, as we are generally compelled to do, the general verdict of the world is to

be fallen back upon, it is very certain, not only that the Reverend Ruthyn Pendragon was no gentleman, but that he was, on the contrary, an exceedingly vulgar person.

There had been curates and curates at Swordsley. The rector, who was deaf, paralytic, and all but blind, had been taken care of for a long period by his relatives, who found the mild and genial climate of Torquay most suited to his infirm state of health. The large revenues of the incumbency had been carefully paid in to the bankers of the Reverend Mr. Marrowfat—that was the name of the invalid rector; and the successive curates had been as punctually paid their small and not increasing stipends. The evil-tongued, who were neither more nor less numerous at Swordsley than elsewhere, averred that the patroness in ordinary to ecclesiastical preferment under the Rector of Swordsley was a certain Mrs. Gryphon, by the mother's side a Marrowfat, by conjugal relation the widow of a broken shipbroker, and who was good enough to officiate as housekeeper, companion, and general *locum tenens* to the infirm clerical gentleman. She did every thing for him. She opened his letters, and read those which he received; nay, after the Reverend Mr. Marrowfat's death, human malignity went so far as to say—in the great probate case of Marrowfat and Wife *versus* Gryphon—that this indefatigable widow-lady made the rector's will for him, and had it all her own way in making it. This, however, is only by the way. I am afraid that she did appoint the curates, and that the advent of the ecclesiastic who stammered, and of the other one who had no H's, must be laid to her charge. Of the red-headed curate, however, Mrs. Gryphon must be held blameless. He of the scarlet locks was a nominee of the Chucklebuxes, a rival branch of the Marrowfat family, who obtained temporary dominion over the poor old clergyman during an absence of Mrs. Gryphon in London. The widow had a graceless nephew,—a Gryphon, not a Marrowfat,—who, having spent a large legacy, principally in hire of dogcarts, and the purchase of cherry-brandy, shirts of extraordinary pattern, and coloured lithographs of eminent dramatic performers, had enlisted in the Hussars, but was speedily bought off from the druff and husks of the dépôt at Maidstone by his affectionate aunt. Having unsuccessfully tempted fortune as a commercial traveller for an article in general demand (the celebrated steel-edged wooden razors), as a billiard-marker, and as a frequenter of certain dry skittle-alleys, whither gentlemen of agricultural appearance were brought to play, and where, it is said, they were sometimes drugged and robbed, young Ripton Gryphon again enlisted; this time in her Majesty's infantry of the line. He was again bought off; and after enjoying for a short time an appointment in the metropolitan police force, from which he was dismissed for a fault, harmless in itself, but highly subversive of discipline, being that of offering to fight his inspector for half a crown, this gay youth became an omnibus conductor, a waiter at a tavern where the hours were rather early than late, and an attendant at fictitious auctions, where his business was to bid for gigantic plated cruet-stands, and, with an air of extreme

solicitude, to inspect curiously inlaid writing-desks, handed round for that purpose on a japanned tea-tray. In this place of business he was ordinarily known by the familiar sobriquet of "Rip the bonnet." If I have mentioned the peculiar phases in the career of this sportive young man, it has been merely to mark the strong points of contrast in his character. Ripton Gryphon was exceedingly intelligent. His education had been excellent. He was a good classical scholar, a ready speaker, and he wrote a beautiful hand. These acquirements did not in the least militate against his being, root and branch, a hopeless and incurable scamp. With that odd perversity not uncommon to her sex, Mrs. Gryphon positively adored this lamentable scapegrace; and as he happened to be at the same time tall, curly-haired, straight of limb, bright of eye, and generally good-looking, the widow declared that her Ripton was born to be a gentleman; that he would sow his wild oats; that he should go into the Church, and that a country curacy was the very thing to suit him, pending, of course, his elevation to the episcopal bench. To all appearance, it certainly seemed that the soil of Mr. Ripton Gryphon's moral nature had been exhausted by the cultivation of wild oats, and that unless it lay fallow for a time it was not likely to produce any thing but an abundant crop of hemp; but with the energy and audacity characteristic of a lady accustomed to deal only with weak and timid people, and to work her will upon them, Mrs. Gryphon set about converting a young fellow who was bidding fair to graduate at the hulks into a candidate for holy orders. She found out the easy chaplain to an easy bishop, who had already ordained a gentleman not quite right in his head for a living near the Land's End, and another who was, not quite right in his morals for a chaplaincy in the West Indies. Mrs. Gryphon learned to know, as some of us know, and as all of us ought to know, that other means exist for wearing a cassock and bands, and tacking 'reverend' to one's name, besides taking a university degree. The easy chaplain recommended her to a tutor for her Ripton,—a college man, a ripe scholar, who had taken deacon's orders, who was as proud as Lucifer and as poor as Job, and whose name was Ruthyn Pendragon. The graceless nephew was confided to the care of this instructor, and in a quiet retirement at Clapham, supported from the widow-lady's funds, did, for a certain period, make some progress in leaving off sack and living cleanly, like a gentleman. What is a gentleman? It was during the sojourn of Mrs. Gryphon in London, of course in the interests of her *protégé*, that the Chucklebox faction achieved a momentary triumph; and the reverend gentleman who had no H's, having married a lady who had two thousand pounds, and so resigned his appointment, brought in the curate with the red head. Mrs. Gryphon returned to Torquay in a rage, and the shock of her temper was almost too much for the poor old rector. She was appeased, however, by abject concessions, and the immediate and ignominious dismissal of the entire Chucklebox faction (the danger was imminent; for there was one Chucklebox who was medical, of the homœopathic persuasion, and who

was also a distinguished amateur will-maker); and she soon resumed her empire over her reverend patient and relative. So hard did this lady work towards the accomplishment of her purpose, so various were her resources, so strong was her will, so feeble were those with whom she had to deal, that I for one should not have been surprized if success had crowned her enterprise, and if Ripton Gryphon had at last crept through the hawse-holes on board the ecclesiastical bark. Stranger things have happened, believe me. I am not writing from imagination, or without book. All the widow's plots and schemes were, alas, foiled by Ripton Gryphon taking it into his head to vindicate his natural character. He ran away from Mr. Pendragon, his tutor, and was not heard of any more. Many a similar scapegrace, whose relatives are vainly inquiring after him, or, through the medium of newspaper advertisements, as vainly entreating him to return, is quietly tried under a false name at some provincial assizes, and quietly transported, without any body save some chance gaoler being the wiser for it. "That's a baronet, sir," said a convict's-warder to me once on Southsea Common, pointing to a peculiarly villanous-looking individual in cross-barred canvas and an oil-skin hat, who was leisurely tickling the turf with his spade,—“that's a baronet, and kep' his 'osses and his 'ounds. But, Lord love you, sir, he ain't at Portsmouth, leastways as his genteel fam'ly think. Must live abroad for his 'elth, sir. He's at Paw, in the Pyrenees, a living in his own chatow, is that baronet.” But what became of Ripton Gryphon there was no deponent to say. He went away, and didn't come back. He may have subsided into penal servitude, as has already been hinted. He may have turned up swollen, blue, ghastly, and drowned, in the ooze of some riverain creek, and have passed from a parish dead-house to a parish grave. He may have enlisted again, have died on board a transport, and been flung to the fishes. He may have been murdered. Who knows? Men pass and pass in the great glass of Life like the Kings in Macbeth's vision; and there is no remembrance of those that have gone before, and no knowledge of those that are to come afterwards.

Who, for instance, could have foretold that Ruthyn Pendragon, the tutor of the graceless scion of the Gryphons, would have ever become curate of Swordsley! yet it was his *kismet*, his fate, to occupy that post. By one of those odd coincidences which are perpetually baffling and perplexing us, Pendragon, having passed into priests' orders, was recommended to the new rector of Swordsley,—poor old Mr. Marrowfat having been gathered to his fathers,—and obtained employment from the Reverend Ernest Goldthorpe. It is not fitting to tell how the widow, at once bereaved of her rector and of her nephew, raged and stormed at the course which events had taken. It wasn't Ruthyn Pendragon's fault if Ernest Goldthorpe chose to take him. He wanted a curacy, and Ernest wanted a curate: what was more natural? Why should Mrs. Gryphon charge him with the blackest ingratitude, and accuse him of being a traitor and an intriguer. He had not solicited the appointment. It had fallen

in his way, and he had taken it. The widow would have liked to say all kinds of possible things against the new curate; but there was nothing to be said against him. He was stanchly recommended by college magnates. He was eminently learned. His poverty was notorious; but his moral character was without stain. Ernest Goldthorpe was glad to be able to do a service to so able and respectable a young man. So the Gryphon was finally discomfited,—she had got all the rector's money though, and all the Marrowfats and Chucklebuxes, with their lawyers to boot, failed in dispossessing her thereof,—and the Reverend Ruthyn Pendragon was curate to the Rector of Swordsley.

Stay,—learning, respectability, character, all granted,—there might have been one little thing to be alleged against the Reverend Ruthyn Pendragon. He *was* a very vulgar person. He had plenty of H's, and used them in the right place, but he was desperately vulgar. He looked like a vulgar person. He talked like one. He ate and drank like one. He dressed like one. There was a vague but uncertain vulgarity in his face, his smile, his deameanour. His bold, firm, defined handwriting was vulgar to every cross of a *t*, to every dot of an *i*. When he first entered the presence of Lady Talmash, that aristocratic churchwoman held up her hands, and whispered to Magdalen, "However comes that boor by the name of Pendragon?"

By lineage Ruthyn was a gentleman of the most apcient descent. What were Normans, Saxons, Danes, to his old stock? He sprang from the genuine Phoenician stock, as I suppose all the Tre, Pols, and Pens of Cornwall do. Ruthyn came from that famous although somewhat remote province. Unhappily there were no tin-mines in his family, nor, had Pendragon died, would there have been twenty thousand or ten underground in Cornwall anxious to know the reason why. He had no money. He was an orphan, and alone in the world.

An old grandmother at St. Mawes had brought this vulgar person up. She did what she could for him, and her small savings were laid out for his benefit. Ruthyn's father was a gentleman, who, about the year 1826, in company with other adventurous Cornish men, had gone in quest of some silver-mines in Peru, and found the *vomito nero* instead, of which, at Lima, he straightway died. The old grandmother did what she could for the orphan, which was not much. The father had, on the principle of conveying coals to Newcastle, taken most of the available ready money of the family with him to the silver-mines of Peru. In after years Ruthyn Pendragon did not mind confessing that in his boyhood he had made a voyage in a fishing-smack, with a view to see whether he would like to be apprenticed to the sea; and that he had served a short probation behind the shop-counter of a chemist, who likewise sold grocery and haberdashery, at Truro. These early associations may have been instrumental in planting the first seeds of that vulgarity for which Ruthyn Pendragon was always noted, and for which he eventually became famous. In process of time a Cornish gentleman

of means, who had known the paternal Pendragon, advised Ruthyn's grandmother to send him to a certain ancient and well-known grammar-school in the West Country. He made great progress in his studies here, and was commended by his master as a very diligent and capable boy, while he was excepted to by his schoolfellows as being a pitiable vulgar one. He obtained an exhibition at last, and took that, and his vulgarity, and a huge stock (for a boy) of book-learning, and a vast fund of natural shrewdness, observation, and humour, with him to college. Any thing else? well, he had a slender wardrobe, and his grandmother's blessing. His successes at the university were solid, if not brilliant. It is said of him, that leaving school and entering the mail-coach which was to convey him to town, Ruthyn Pendragon flung his hat into the air, and cried, "Here goes for Archbishop of Canterbury;" but at the university it was speedily decided that such a vulgar fellow would never obtain a fellowship, while doubts were expressed as to whether any gentlemanly bishop could ever be persuaded to ordain such a lout. He was not likely to go wrong at the university. His health was of the rudest, his frame of the strongest; and excesses of dissipation would have hurt him no more than excess of study; but he was wise, and chose the latter. He read desperately and continuously. All that the gay youth of the university could say against him was that he was vulgar. They could not in their charmingly contemptuous manner call him a "cad." There was no denying his gentle blood. There was no finding a blot on his scutcheon. His great-great-grandfather was duly enshrined in Fuller's *Worthies*; a great-granduncle was mentioned in Anthony à Wood. The university tradesmen refrained from soliciting his custom; they knew that he could do them no good, and that they could do him no harm. Of what use were well-cut coats and brilliant scarves to one who, winter and summer, wore a plain black coat, which he acknowledged to have bought second-hand, and to mend himself when it required repair; and beneath that a waistcoat and trousers of coarse gray serge, made by his old grandmother at St. Mawes? Where he first purchased his cap and gown was a mystery; the triflers declared that he had bought them at a London masquerade warehouse, on his way to college. They were certainly curiosities of faded shabbiness. His linen was dreadfully coarse, but scrupulously clean. He was in the habit of biting the nails to the quick, and no scissors were needed for his large healthy-looking hands. His hair was naturally dark and glossy, and he needed no Macassar. He looked like a man who washed with yellow soap. He never had a row with the bargemen on the river. They respected and feared him, not alone for his strength, which was palpably prodigious, but for his homely, kindly manners; for he was not above holding the poorest and roughest in discourse, and would talk to them by the half-hour together of common things and their daily avocations. He was not vulgar to them. Some called him a "true gentleman," but more frequently working-men exclaimed: "We likes him, for he talks like one of us." Clearly a very vulgar person this Ruthyn Pendragon.

There were young gentlemen of his college whose quarterly cigar-bills came to ten, nay twenty, pounds. Viscount Racquetborough, indeed, owed his tobacconist two hundred and odd, but, then, most of that was discount. Ruthyn rarely smoked; but he casually mentioned that the use of a short pipe had been habitual to him before he was twelve years of age; and when from time to time some new man who thought him an original persuaded him to come to his rooms, he indulged in a calumet of that very strongest cavendish which young undergraduates buy, like Editions of the Fathers, more for show than use. Such strong meat is not fit for babes. He was by rule a water-drinker; but sometimes after rowing he would drink of the country beer that labourers drank. Somebody mentioned Allsopp's bitter ale to him, and he returned for answer, "What is that?" The Dons could not like him; he was too vulgar, and yet he was not offensive. He was innocent of any sins against collegiate discipline, but he neither invited nor seemed thankful for praise. The Dons were of course absolved from toadying him, and he seemed to be utterly ignorant of the fact that any thing was to be got from toadying the Dons. He was a great eater, although occasionally it was known that he passed the twenty-four hours without any sustenance more solid than bread and butter; yet those who watched him—and he was strange enough to have many observers—remarked that he could eat voraciously of cold meat, of suet-pudding, and of buttered toast. He was not taciturn, for he was always ready to speak when spoken to; but he seldom volunteered conversation. Those who most objected to his vulgarity could not help admiring his honest discourse, full of manly and sensible reflection. He was one in whose presence young men were somehow ashamed to swear, to talk of loose and shameful things, or, indeed, to talk nonsense, if they could avoid it. The most brilliant conversationalists were on their mettle in the presence of Ruthyn Pendragon. And yet he could enjoy humour, and at a droll story, proper for a decorous man to hear, would open his large mouth and laugh sonorously. The only overt act against the usages of society which he had been known to commit was this. He had gone to a man's rooms to return some books he had borrowed—he was not above borrowing books. A dozen young fellows were present, and as Ruthyn Pendragon turned to depart, he saw a pack of cards which had been inadvertently left exposed on a table. Without any more ado he seized the cards, flung them into the fire, put his back before it, folded his arms, and said, "I am no censor of manners, Proctor, or Puritan, and you may think that this is no business of mine. But it is. Cards are the Devil's books. Wherever I find them, I burn them. Good morning. If any body thinks he has a right to complain, I will fight him, here or elsewhere." But nobody cared to complain, or to fight Ruthyn Pendragon; so he went, and, indeed, the sound that accompanied his departure much more resembled a cheer than a murmur of discontent. The story was told about and gained him much esteem, although men were careful not to invite this rigid hater of graven images to their card-parties. It

was known that he was not a hypocrite, and would not lie. Lord Racquetborough expressed himself much pleased when he heard of the story. "By Jove," he said, "the Grisly Bear is a trump. I wish I could lend him fifty pounds. He looks so deuced hard up. I wish my father could put a living by for him." Viscount Racquetborough's papa was the Earl of Tenniscourt (family name De la Paume), very noble, but impoverished. Viscount Racquetborough was always wishing good things to every body, but his lordship's habits were expensive and his means were limited. He ended by owing the tobacconist many hundreds of pounds; and, going through the court, retired to Baden-Baden until such time as he should be called to the House of Lords to legislate for vulgar people.

In the second year of Ruthyn's residence the old grandmother at St. Mawes died. The few pounds that were left of her savings barely sufficed to bury her, and to pay the expenses of her grandson to Cornwall and back. He had no kindred now, no money, and no friends. The country gentleman who had advised his being sent to the grammar-school was dead. He was known at the university, and might have earned some money by reading with men; but he preferred to leave college for a while. He went away, and found a situation as usher in a school near London. The master was an ignorant brute, who had been bankrupt in the linen-drapery line, and who, when his certificate was definitely refused, had hesitated whether he should turn corn-cutter, low comedian, or schoolmaster. He had an aptitude for the two former vocations; for the latter his capacity was limited to the possession of a very strong arm and a cruel disposition. Broomback, of Clapham Rise (he is Dr. Broomback now, a German degree), was glad to secure the services of a good classical scholar, and a university man to boot, for forty pounds a year. So Ruthyn Pendragon taught the boys, and Broomback beat them, and his wife took tithe and toll on their clothes and linen; and thus the division of scholastic labour was complete. The boys used to laugh at the usher's odd, rough ways, as he read Greek Testament to them, with a great hole under the arm of his black coat; but he was kind and just, and I think that before he went away nine out of ten of those children loved the poor usher. By great good luck there was a boy at Broomback's who was the son of a lady of some fortune. It having occurred to Broomback to beat this lad (who was frail and delicate) into a fever, he was removed from Clapham Rise; and when he got well, he begged so earnestly that his studies might be directed by his dear old usher,—so he called Ruthyn,—that his mamma forthwith engaged the friendless Cornishman as domestic tutor to her darling. In time Pendragon saved enough money to take a small house of his own, and advertise for pupils; and one of those pupils was the Ripton Gryphon you have heard of. I don't know what Ruthyn Pendragon thought of the preposterous plan of turning a scamp into a clergyman, indulged in by the vain and self-willed housekeeper of the Reverend Mr. Marrowfat; but he did his duty by the prodigal, even to the extent

of having one or two up and down fights with him. In these combats it must be admitted that Rip, although for his youth a somewhat experienced bruiser, invariably got the worst of it. He was the last pupil that Ruthyn Pendragon took. He was rich enough to go back to the university and take his degree. He was ordained on the strength of a miserable cure offered him by the proprietor of a large bone-boiling manufactory in the Essex marshes, who had a chapel on his premises for the benefit of his work-people, and thought it rather a grand thing to entertain a chaplain at his own expense. The young curate—he was now five-and-twenty years of age—did not stay long in Essex. The people were willing enough to receive religious instruction; but when they were not at work they straggled away to the adjacent beer-shops and got tipsy, and on Sundays they generally had the ague; and finally the bone-boiler breaking, it was discovered that he had been robbing every body for the last fifteen years (he was the man who did eighty-seven thousand pounds worth of bills in one morning, assuring the firm who discounted them that every bill “had bones at the bottom of it,” but it turned out rather that every bill was fundamentally fraudulent); and Ruthyn Pendragon lost his curacy. He was for a while unemployed; but, on the recommendation of a college-acquaintance, he became known to the Reverend Ernest Goldthorpe, whose views on Church matters, in the latter part of 1849, had not become so strongly pronounced, and who was happy to have a person so fitted by education and principles for the responsible position confided to him, and who, by family descent at least, was undeniably a gentleman.

Such was the curate of Swordsley, who had not been six months in the village before he was idolised by the inhabitants, and who, when Ernest began to lean towards High-Church doctrines, became, by tacit consent, and without the slightest manifestation of open opposition on his part, the leader of the Low-Church party. “Ah, if he was only our rector!” cried the men of Swordsley. The women, too, were unanimous in his praise,—all save the haughty maiden at The Casements, Miss Magdalen Hill.

This young lady took no pains to disguise her disdain and aversion for the curate. He was from the very first eminently distasteful to her. She shuddered at the contrast between the pale, thoughtful, refined Ernest, with his high white brow, his crisply curled chestnut locks,—he was a delicate copy of his brother Hugh,—his tiny hands and feet, his neat and well-fitting garments, and this brawny, swarthy, hirsute, round-shouldered, bull-necked, large-limbed, Ruthyn Pendragon. The man’s head was capacious enough, but his black hair grew thick and tufted down to within a couple of inches of his bushy eye-brows. Had he let Nature have her way, he would have been bearded like a pioneer. His hands were uncouthly shaped, and corrugated with knotty veins. Although he had the arms and the torso of a Hercules, he was short and clumsy in stature, and his legs were slightly bowed. She raged within herself to think that this

ragged, vulgar, truncated colossus, who blew his nose with a trumpet-sound, who trampled rather than walked over the flowers of a carpet, who clattered his tea-cup and ate his food ravenously, who dragged books from shelves, and if he took notice of a lap-dog only forced open its mouth to look at his teeth, who never wore gloves,—should be a gentleman of long descent; whereas Ernest, with all his refinement and his address, and the title that was in store for him, was but the son of a city money-spinner of mushroom extraction. Why should this vulgar person, she thought, be a gentleman? What right had he to a proud name,—he who looked like some Cornish miner fresh from wielding the pick? She did not soften in the least when she heard how good and kind and thoughtful he was to the poor. Had she no goodness, no kindness, and no thought? Was Ernest destitute of these good qualities? She bit her lip in anger when she learned that this rough, awkward man, who could not speak French, who had plainly said that people should come to church to pray, and not to look at pictures, and that the best mural decoration for the chancel was a fresh coat of whitewash; who lodged at Pearkleborough's the grocer's, and bought his own chop or steak at the butcher's (he could scarcely bring himself to charge the curate any thing for it)—should be revered and beloved by the parishioners, who looked on Ernest with a dislike that was little short of hatred. She heard that this man, who could scarcely handle a knife and fork, and was not fit to be trusted with a tea-cup, could bandage wounds, could bleed a horse, or put leeches on a child's temples; could dandle babies, could make out petty tradesmen's bills, could appease lovers' quarrels, and prevent contentious neighbours from going to law; and that he did all this without currying favour with the poor (who are as easily and as often toadied as the rich), but always with a homely, sensible, simple-mindedness. Magdalen knew that the curate disapproved of the rector's views. She disliked him for that. She disliked him for his popularity. She disliked him for his very goodness. She did. And yet she was a virtuous, pious, and—so far as her purse went—a charitable young woman. How much more reason had she to dislike Ruthyn Pendragon, when, as he had the ineffable presumption to do, he told her that he loved her?

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH THE CURATE GOES TO LONDON.

"He did," Magdalen exclaimed indignantly,—almost passionately for one of her composed manner. "He told me so in this very room."

"And what if he did, Maggy?" was the reply of the person to whom Miss Hill addressed herself. "Did you expect him to tell you so in the church-porch, or in front of the village-inn? If you have curates here, you must expect them to make love to you. It stands to reason."

This conversation took place one May morning in the antique drawing-

room of The Casements. Magdalen Hill was sitting at her perpetual hard labour of illuminating select martyrologies on vellum; and her sole companion was a lady of about her own age, who, in certainly an easy if not an elegant posture, reclined in a large arm-chair just opposite to Miss Hill's working-table, and contemplated, with that complacent interest which only habitual laziness can give, the delicate and minute pursuit in which the other was engaged.

The lady was young—a year in advance of Magdalen perhaps, and although not beautiful, comely to look upon. She had more than what is termed “a tendency to *embonpoint*,” for she was decidedly plump, tottering on the verge of corpulence, so to speak. Now of fat girls there are several varieties. There is your fat baby-girl, a delightful little dumpling of a child, every one of whose dimples is a mine of delight, and every one of the creases in whose rosy limbs inspires you with an irresistible propensity to tickle it. These are the little baby-children that Rubens painted so gloriously. He made their little puffed-out cheeks celestially roseate; he curled their flaxen locks like unto the young tendrils of the vine; he tipped their little heels and elbows with rich carnations; he took away their sex, and made them epicene; and when he had added little wings of green and golden plumage to their shoulders, they were no longer baby-children, but angels, ministering in the apotheoses of kings and emperors, who, I sincerely trust, have reached the destination which the courtly pencil of Peter Paul ascribed to their dead majesties. Then there is your fat school-girl, with long, fair ringlets, profuse as a Louis-Quatorze perruque, with fixed blue eyes that remind you unpleasantly of the Pantheon Bazaar and Madame Montanari's wax-work shop, and with a dull, listless fixity of demeanour that makes one always wish to find out whereabouts the string is, in order to pull it, and cause the eyes to move and the great doll to squeak “pa-pa” and “ma-ma.” Yet another variety of the fat school-girl is there in the romp, or “tom-boy,” who has cheeks as ruddy and as hard as a Ribstone pippin; who is continually grazing the skin off her arms, and tearing the trimming off the ends of her trousers; who, if she lives in the country, is in the habit of catching young colts and riding them without saddle or bridle round paddocks; who is always getting into domestic trouble through her transactions with a big black dog fond of the water and of chivying cats; who is always laughing, has a tremendous appetite, and once fought with a boy and came off victorious. The decline of the old-fashioned system of education, and the rise of seminaries and collegiate institutions, where young ladies attend lectures on the Odic force and the Therapeutic Cosmogony of Ancient Art, has made the tom-boy fat girl an exceedingly rare specimen of femininity; but she is still occasionally to be met with—notably in Westmoreland boarding-schools, and in farm-houses of the West. I lament the progressive extinction of the merry fat girl. She usually grew up to be a jolly, comfortable matron, with a tribe of sunny children, all as great romps as she had been. Her pickled walnuts

were perfection. She was one of those admirable women who always give you something to eat when you call upon them, and if you are neither hungered nor athirst, insist on your carrying away a pot of preserves or a slice of bride-cake with you. It was in the golden age, and England was merry England indeed, when those fat matrons who had been fat girls flourished. They used to entertain you at "meat teas"—bounteous repasts, where there were sausages and pressed beef, soused mackerel, and potato-cakes.

The fat young lady need not have been a fat child. Some are of the lean kind in early girlhood, and fall into fatness as others fall into love. The Germans are the most prolific in fat young ladies. Their names are Ermengarde, Hilda, Dorothea. Their eyes are blue, but not doll-like, for they are full of sentiment. They call each other "*Du*," and continuously embroider cigar-cases, tobacco-pouches, nay, carpet-bags even, for officers in the Grand-Duke's army, or students of the university of Katzelstein. They sit and sigh, and carve Ludolf or Heinrich's names on the bark of linden-trees. They write pretty little sonnets to the sky and the birds in fat albums bound in blue watered silk. They make little sketches in coloured crayons, representing Körner going to the wars, the Fahnenwacht keeping his lonely watch and not daring to name the lady of his love. They wish they were not quite so fat; but they are above drinking vinegar to make themselves thin. Perhaps they eat a little too much. They, too, marry, and have prodigious families; but they don't become jolly. They go through life with a meek smile of placid resignation, eating plentifully, and reading many novels. "*Elle a beaucoup zouffert, Matame la Paronne, tans le temps*," tawny-moustached Captain Kalbsfleisch whispers to you at the *table-d'hôte*. You look at "*Matame la Paronne*," and see that she has got very well through two courses, and is making a vigorous onslaught on the third,—let us say of stewed trout and macaroons, hot roast veal and raspberry-jam, or some equally anomalous German *plat*,—and find it difficult to persuade yourself that the Baroness has ever suffered from any thing more serious than indigestion.

The lady who sat in the great arm-chair opposite Magdalen Hill by no means belonged to the sentimental or to the doll-like category of stout young ladies. Far more probable that ten years before she had belonged to the order of tomboys; indeed, it may be as well to make a clean breast of it at once, and avow that, at fourteen years of age, there had never been a franker, merrier, noisier hoyden than the Honourable Letitia Salusbury. She was an only child; that may have had something to do with it. The lady her mother—a meek woman, who was frightened at mice, and firmly believed in the Apparition of Mrs. Veal, as related by Daniel Defoe—had died during her infancy, which may have had more to do with it. At all events, Letitia grew up through childhood petted, caressed, and humoured in every caprice, and if she was not spoiled herself, she spoiled, at least, innumerable frocks, pinafores, pairs of socks, and garden-hats. To enumerate the panes of glass fractured by this young lady, the lustres, china

monsters, rare tea-cups, irrevocably smashed; the dolls she dismembered; the injuries she did to marqueterie tables and costly carpets; and the immense benefit she conferred on the bookselling trade by destroying every book that came within her reach, and so increasing the consumption of juvenile literature,—would be a task as wearisome as to learn the annual speeches on the Army and Navy Estimates by heart, throwing in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's financial statement by way of epilogue. She condescended to learn very little, but what she did learn she learned very well. She was the bane, terror, and despair of eight successive governesses, native and foreign; but she took a fancy to the Swordsley curate who stammered, and actually went through the Latin *Accidence* with him. Her indulgent papa, after vainly explaining to her that it was necessary for a young lady of her high station to attain some proficiency in the Continental languages, in music, and in drawing, despatched her to a Parisian *pensionnat*. After an enforced sojourn of three years, equally irksome to parent and child, Letitia returned to Swordsley a very fair French scholar. Of her drawing, it may be sufficient to say that she had a particular aptitude for sketching horses and dogs; but as to music, I am afraid that her progress had not extended farther than enabled her to whistle sundry lively airs familiar to the youth of Paris, and to join in the chorus of numerous convivial melodies, of which the wonder was to know where she had picked them up. It is certain, however, that she had publicly diswiggled the dancing-master at the establishment of Madame Givry de la Roncière in the Champs Elysées; that she had organised numerous hot suppers in the dormitory, the preparation of one of which surreptitious banquets had nearly set the school on fire; and that she had blown up the bust of the sainted M. de Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambrai, which stood in the garden, with gunpowder. She was the delight of her schoolfellows; but the diswiggled dancing-master called her "*une belle Mégère*." Madame Givry de la Roncière bore with her eccentricities, for the quarterly bills sent to her papa, and so punctually settled by his solicitor at St. Beeketsbury, were very large, and made her a valuable pupil; but after the departure of the Honourable Miss Salusbury, the much-suffering schoolmistress spoke of her privately, only as "*cette petite diablesse*," and in public, warned her flock against the example of "*la conduite inconcevablement dévergondée d'une demoiselle que la convenance m'empêche de nommer*."

The Honourable Letitia had, as a child, always had her own way; and she was not likely to abandon it on coming to woman's estate. Her papa was very old, and adored her. She returned all his love with interest, but that did not hinder her from tyrannising over him in a manner quite as good-natured as it was arbitrary. She had been, at school, and with the exception of her brief probation under the curate who stammered, a very close imitation of a dunce; but on her return to England she began to read with much avidity. The bent of her literary studies was peculiar. She had a healthy scorn for French romances, and esteemed them all, from beginning to end, as so much vicious humbug. The historians, essayists, and

moralists, whose bulky tomes graced the morocco-valanced shelves of her father's library, she classed, generically, as "old fogies," and she kept fishhooks in a very splendidly bound copy of *Elegant Extracts*. Nor did our English three-volume novels, mainly relating to the cultivation of the affections among the upper classes of society, please her any more than the little *brochures*, full of paper poison, which are so plentiful in Paris. "Trash," "rubbish," and "rigmarole" the Honourable Letitia Salusbury called the staple products of the circulating library at St. Becket'sbury. But, for the enlivening works of Captain Marryat and the other nautical novelists, and for the *Ingoldsby Legends*, Miss Salusbury took an immense liking. She had the dreadful heresy to declare all poetry—except it was "funny"—a bore; but she luxuriated in the perusal of Nimrod's sporting sketches. She yawned over Sir Walter Scott, and intimated her opinion that Diana Vernon was a designing minx, who only put on a riding-habit to hook Frank Osbaldistone; but I much fear that she had heard of a work written by the late Mr. Pierce Egan, and called *Boxiana*. It is terrible to tell, but the Honourable Letitia Salusbury was an assiduous student of *Ruff's Guide to the Turf* and the *Racing Calendar*. You see that I wish to extenuate nothing of her faults; but, in order that nothing may be set down in malice concerning her, I must, while admitting that she did shoot, fish, hunt, drive,—tandem occasionally,—and bet, deny in the most unqualified manner what has been averred by the malevolent, viz. that the Honourable Letitia Salusbury smoked cigars and drank brandy-and-water. As to her conversation, you will be enabled to judge of its tenor; and as to another accusation which has been brought against her, of swearing, you may be sure that, if Miss Salusbury did now and then rap out an ugly word, I shall always, for good manners' sake, suppress it.

I say that she was not beautiful, but was still comely to look upon. She had great flashing brown eyes and a quantity of vagrant brown hair, which was ordinarily thrust into a net, or tumbled off her forehead anyhow. She had a great deal too much colour—at least, of that colour which is not sold by the perfumers, and that won't rub off. Her mouth would have been handsome had it been a little smaller. Her teeth were very white, but they were large and square. Her nose wavered between the mild *retroussé* and the decided snub. But her whole face beamed with candour, happiness, and good-nature, and these amply redeemed the irregularity of her features. Her figure, for all its plumpness, was graceful and supple, and she was as agile as a squirrel. Nobody could precisely say that Miss Salusbury was masculine, although she delighted and excelled in most of the pursuits and the exercises of men. No; she was *not* masculine, and yet she had, it must be confessed, something of the Amazon of the Cirque about her, with a more considerable admixture of a good-looking milkmaid. It is very improper to say so. No doubt it is unpardonable to unveil a heroine who, albeit she was a peer's daughter, frequently spoke of money as "tin," of a carriage as a "trap," of a

gentleman as a "fellow." She could not help it, she said, when remonstrated with by Magdalen. It was her way. There was no harm in it, and she hated humbug. So, as it was her way, there was but one course open, and that was to let her have it.

I have hinted that the papa of this young lady, who knew quite as much about horses, dogs, rats, and badgers as one of her own grooms, was a peer of the realm. You may take down your peerage and look for Chalkstonehengist (Viscount). Jehan de Salusbury did good service at Agincourt. Sir Mulciber Salusbury, of Chalkstonehengist, was summoned as a baron to Henry the Eighth's first parliament. The Salusburies fought on the King's side during the civil wars, and the possessor of the title was made a Viscount at the Restoration. "*Le roy, la foy, la loy*," was the Salusbury motto. The Lord Chalkstonehengist regnant was a very old gentleman, born while the American War was at its hottest. He was the most consistent, but the mildest and most benevolent, of Tories of the old school. He spoke of the Reform Bill as "that grievous error in legislation," and of the Reformers as "gentlemen who hold the pernicious doctrines of Mr. Hunt and Mr. Cobbett." A bitter Tory lord held his proxy, for Lord Chalkstonehengist seldom made his appearance in the senate-house. He wore a blue coat and brass buttons, a low-crowned white hat and top-boots. He had not forgotten his scholarship, and the composition of Latin verses sometimes served to while away an odd hour. It was even said that he had been engaged for years in writing a history of the American War, in which the Stamp Act was incontrovertibly defended, and Mr. Washington very hardly dealt by. Until years and infirmities had overtaken him, he had been an enthusiast in the sports of the field; and it was with an irrepressible pleasure, mingled with an odd sensation that the thing wasn't exactly proper, that he heard of the daring deeds of his daughter, in riding 'cross country, leaping gates and clearing ditches. For Miss Salusbury was in all respects a worthy descendant of the old monastic huntress, Dame Juliana Berners; and, from her own practical experience, could have capped the sporting wisdom of the noble lady who wrote

"Wheresoever ye fare by fryth or by fell
My dere chylde take heede how Trystram do you tell
How manie manere bestys of venerie there were,
Lysten to youre dame, and she shalle you lere:
Four maner bestys of venerie there are,—
The fyrst of them the harte, the second is the hare;
The boore is one of tho: the wulfe and not one more."

only, Dame Letitia Salusbury would have taken away the "boore" and the "wulfe," and added the fox.

Father and daughter lived pleasantly and comfortably enough in their old house on the older estate of Chalkstonehengist, about a mile and a quarter from The Casements. Lord Chalkstonehengist was not very rich, but he had enough and to spare. His high Tory predilections did

not prevent him from being kind, hospitable, and benevolent to his neighbours, to his tenants, and to the poor. As a landlord he was of the most liberal, and, although he preserved his game in moderation, never refused a farmer a day's shooting. As a magistrate he was of the most merciful. They used to tell a story of one Giles Conybeare, an incorrigible poacher, who was brought before his lordship sitting in petty sessions. It was about the twenty-fifth time that Giles had so fallen into trouble for wilful contravention of the Game Laws. His lordship put on his sternest expression of countenance, which at the worst was but dove-like. "Here again, Giles Conybeare," he thundered, or at least tried to thunder. "Were I your lordship, I should make an example of him," whispered the clerk. "Yes," answered the noble magistrate, "an example, certainly, an example must be made of Giles Conybeare." "For the sake of the public," whispered the clerk. "For the sake of the public," his lordship repeated. The wretched Giles began to blubber. He could not deny that he had been taken red-handed, with one pocket full of hares and the other full of springes; but he pleaded his grandmother bedridden with the "rheumatiz," his own want of employment, his large family. For Giles was a philoprogenitive poacher, and had no less than eleven children. "It makes his offence worse," murmured the clerk *sotto voce*. "All this only aggravates your offence, prisoner," said his lordship aloud; and he went on to tell the captive that he ought to be hanged, that he ought to be transported; that he was a disgrace to the village, to the estate, to the country, and so forth. Wurzel, the steward, inclined his head towards the bench, and delivered a pitiable character of Giles from behind his hand. The prisoner could only continue to blubber, to wring his handcuffed hands, and to talk about his bedridden grandmother and his eleven children. "This must be put a stop to," continued his lordship, glancing with benign severity at the culprit. "I'll—no, I won't. How many children did he say he had? Eleven! Ah, dear me! And his grandmother bedridden, too. And no work. Ah! poor fellow. I—I'll give him a pig. Wurzel, give him a pig," quoth Lord Chalkstonehengist, throwing himself back in his arm-chair. You may understand from this that his lordship was not unlikely to be a somewhat indulgent parent.

"And what answer did you return to this lovelorn swain?" said Miss Salusbury, breaking a somewhat irksome silence which had ensued.

"I told him," Magdalen replied, "that I should feel it my duty to acquaint my brother—I mean Ernest—with his conduct, if he presumed to repeat it."

"Well, that wasn't very encouraging; but it's an answer that may cut both ways. Appeals to one's brother may mean any thing. Don't you remember the story of the young lady in Australia—I should like to go to Australia—who wrote just this in a book, and left it, quite by

accident of course, in the way of a bashful swain, 'If he doesn't propose to-morrow, I'll get my brother to thrash him'?"

"I must beg you, Miss Salusbury—" interrupted Magdalen, looking up from her work—

"I must beg you, my dear Maggy," retorted the daughter of the House of Chalkstonehengist, "to remember that there is nothing, after all, so wonderful in the conduct of Mr. Pendragon. He is a gentleman of good family, and although he is only a curate now, why, bless us, he may be made Archbishop of Canterbury some fine morning."

"He had the miserable vanity to tell me as much. He vaunted his poverty, and said that he would hew steps out of the rock of knowledge, whereby to mount to fame and fortune."

"I think I've heard that before," Miss Salusbury remarked with semi-gravity. "It sounds like poetry. I hope it isn't; for I hate poetry, except when it's jolly; and I should be sorry if Pendragon turned out a humbug. Did you ever hear the 'Ratcatcher's Daughter,' Maggy? I made Willy Goldthorpe sing it to me the last time he came over from St. Becketsbury."

It is scarcely necessary to say that Lord Chalkstonehengist's daughter was an immense favourite with young men, both of sporting tendency and the military profession, who voted Lady Talmash a dragon, and Magdalen Hill a snowball. She was declared to be a stunner, a screamer, an out-and-outer,—all kinds of superlatives of admiration were applied to her. She was perfectly frank and unrestrained with the young men. They would have liked to elect her an honorary member of the cavalry mess at St. Becketsbury. At the cover-side her gray riding-habit, and the red feather in her cap, were as well known as Lord Chalkstonehengist's white pony,—he could not follow the hounds now, but liked to see the meet and chat with his neighbours,—or as Farmer Turmut's big brown horse with the star on his forehead. She tolerated smoking, after permission had been asked; but woe betide the luckless wight who lit his cigar without leave being granted, or who by word or deed took a liberty with the Honourable Letitia Salusbury! An unhappy cornet, raw to the service, was once rash enough to chaff her, whereupon the daughter of Chalkstonehengist pulled his ears till they were as crimson as his sash, flung his undress cap out of window, and bade him follow it, or she would make him, she added significantly. You could not take a liberty with her, although she did know the "Ratcatcher's Daughter," and had besides an astounding *répertoire* of ballads and melodies more popular than refined. The Onzeport hounds met near St. Becketsbury, and Letitia rode regularly to them. There had come down a certain celebrated sportswoman—who but the famous Miss Southbank, indeed!—who sometimes hunted other animals besides hares and foxes. She thought it would be capital fun to engage the eccentric daughter of Lord Chalkstonehengist in conversation. Up rode the dashing Southbank, splendid in a scarlet riding-habit, spattereddashed

with patent leather, with the big diamond horseshoe given to her by Lord Racquetborough just previous to his insolvency at her throat, and the riding-whip with the emerald handle presented to her by that well-known sporting blade, Charley Pettycash, who kept so many race-horses, theatres, and dancers, who spent so many thousands a year, and who, when he was transported for life for his innumerable forgeries, turned out to have been all along a clerk in a bank with 150*l.* a year salary. Up rode the Southbank, sancy and radiant, on her noted black mare "Shiny Face." I wonder the horse had not a jewelled surcingle. His mistress was always covered with splendour, and jewels, and shame; and every one of her gewgaws had some history of sin or of folly connected with it. The Southbank presumed to "pass the time of day" to Miss Salusbury, and to ask her whether she meant to put the pot on for the Metropolitan? Letitia started back so as nearly to throw her steed on his haunches, and, trembling with passion, made this reply, "You are an abandoned hussy. I know all about you; and if you dare to speak to me again, I'll cut your wicked face in two with my whip. The Southbank was not very remarkable for placidity of temper, but she was somehow cowed as much by Miss Salusbury's manner as by the matter of her answer. She rode away quite crestfallen, and at the Onzeport hounds was seen no more. She alluded subsequently to Letitia as an "uppish party," but without bitterness. The Southbank was sensible. Of course the blame of having incited her to address Letitia was laid at the door of Puffin, the wretched cornet, who had had his ears pulled. She vainly denied the charge; but it did not much matter. Some months afterwards that well-remembered and eccentric captain of dragoons, Lord Snowstorm, having rendered Puffin's life a burden to him by cutting up hair-brushes in his bed, filling his boots with coal-tar, charging his cigars with moistened gunpowder, corking his face, and shaving off one of his whiskers, the cornet's mamma indignantly interfered, and caused her darling to sell his commission and quit the wicked, depraved service, just after Lord Snowstorm had been turned out of it by the Commander-in-Chief.

Letitia and Magdalen were very good friends; but the intimacy was one-sided. William the dragoon was a favourite with the amazon, and she extended her fondness to Miss Hill; drove over two or three times to see her, invited her to Chalkstonehengist much oftener than Miss Hill chose to come, and persisted in calling her Maggy. But the haughty illuminator never went beyond "Miss Salusbury" in addressing her.

The subject of the curate was any thing but an agreeable one; but Letitia, for some capricious reason of her own, continued to press it.

"Well," she went on. "He did repeat his 'conduct,' as you call it, didn't he?"

"He wrote," Magdalen replied, with cold severity.

"And you—"

"Returned his letter. More than that, I felt it my duty to carry out my threat. I made my brother—I made Ernest acquainted with the affair."

"In other words, you tried to get this poor curate the sack," the unaffected Letitia remarked. "That wasn't very kind-hearted of you, Maggy. And what did the reverend say?"

"He agreed with me that I was not to be insulted with impunity."

"Insulted! where's the insult?"

"Miss Salusbury!" Magdalen exclaimed in proud surprise, and with a positive blush on her pale face.

"Miss Hill!" the other rejoined, mimicking her. "Dear Maggy," she continued, "you are a good girl, after all, although you are as proud as a dog with two tails,"—whence the Honourable Miss Salusbury gathered her prolific collection of similes was always a matter of intense surprise. "What great offence has Pendragon committed? You are both young. He is a clergyman and a gentleman. You are a lady. Surely you can strike a balance between High Church and Low Church. You can't go on for ever moping here, and grizzling about that poor dear Hugh Goldthorpe."

"You forget my position," Magdalen said, in a sad low voice.

"Well, I do perhaps. I forgot that you had a fortune. But what does that matter? Is Pendragon the first man who has wanted to marry a rich woman? Don't you remember the old lines?

"Cloth of frize, be not too bold
If thou art match'd with cloth of gold:
Cloth of gold, do not despise
If thou art match'd with cloth of frize."

Besides," she added, "I don't think that Bruin is mercenary, after all."

"No, indeed," quoth Magdalen, half to herself.

"Then why not have him. Better to be a curate's wife than a lonely spinster, painting away at those everlasting saints and martyrs with their heads on one side, and worrying yourself about High Church and Low Church and Ernest Goldthorpe, who would be a good fellow enough if he didn't wear peas in his shoes, and live on pickled eggs and boiled soda-water."

Again, and at the mention of the rector's name, Magdalen blushed. "I declare," continued Miss Salusbury, "that if Bruin asked me, I'd marry him myself, and beg papa to get him made something better than a curate; though, for the matter of that, I think Pendragon would do best in the Life-Guards. I'm getting tired of the life I lead. It's very jolly, but it's lonely. I don't seem to know where I'm going. I suppose nobody does. Sometimes, when I'm reading *Bell's Life*, I seem to fancy that I should like to be a man. They have a good many advantages over us, those men. Why can't I play at nurr and spell, and walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours? Why can't I match my novice to fight any man in England, bar the 'Mumper'—who is the Mumper?—at catch-weight for a hundred pounds a side? Why can't I show toy-dogs? or patronise the noble sport of ratting? or frequent the Bendigo's Head, where *Boxiana* is kept at the bar, and gloves are always ready for the

convenience of gentlemen? Why can't I go to the festive board, where harmony prevails, and the eccentric Joey Jones is in the chair? Who is Joey Jones, and why is he eccentric, and called Joey? and is he a broker's man, that he is always taking the chair? I should like to be a man. No; I should like to be a Bloomer, or Dr. Elizabeth Johnson, or Madame Ida Pfäiffer, and travel the whole world over; or Richard Carr, the female sailor. What a brick Grace Darling was! I wonder whether Joan of Arc's armour hurt her. I tried on one of the old helmets in our hall the other day, and had a frightful headache for hours afterwards. Perhaps the best thing to do would be to marry somebody."

"I think so too," responded Magdalen, glancing with solemn pity at this misguided young woman.

"The difficulty is to find somebody. The daughter and heiress of Lord Chalkstonehengist can't go to the barracks at St. Becketbury, and say, Messieurs of the dragoons, or gentlemen of the Onzeport hunt, will you marry me? I can't pickle and I can't preserve. I can't play and I can't sing, but I can leap a five-barred gate, make the best flies in Kent, and shoot a trout in the water. Heigho!"

"Truly, the daughter of Lord Chalkstonehengist could not do this; but might she not find pursuits more in keeping with her rank in life, and to that which society expects from her?"

"Society is all humbug," cried the Honourable Miss Salusbury, in something like a passion; "and I've tried all the pursuits in keeping with my rank in life, and they're all botheration."

"There remains marriage as a resource open to you; and surely, if the gentleman in whom you take so great an interest—"

"Pickles!" exclaimed the Honourable Miss Salusbury. Her expletives were positively unprecedented in lack of refinement. "My honest persuasion is, that if I let Pendragon know that I liked him, he would calmly tell me that he didn't want to have any thing to say to me. I know the man. Besides, I was but jesting about him. He is and can be nothing to me. You know that he is over head and ears in love with you, Maggy; and cold and angry with him as you seem, I can't help fancying—"

"It is too late," said Magdalen, poising her brush, and resolutely driving a spike into the bosom of a martyr on the vellum before her. "Ernest knows all. He was justly shocked and indignant. He summoned Mr. Pendragon before him. High words passed between them only yesterday; and I believe that Mr. Pendragon will shortly leave this part of the country."

"Then I'm very sorry for it; and the fat's all in the fire," Miss Salusbury remarked, and rising in dudgeon. I shall go home to lunch; will you come? I've got the trap and the two piebalds on the lawn. St. Gengulphus the Great can wait a couple of hours for his eyebrows," she concluded, glancing in great disdain at the spiked martyr.

Magdalen sadly shook her head, and declined the offer.

"Then I'm off. Good-by, Maggy. Why don't you turn nun, or Sister of Charity, or something of that sort. You might be a martyr then yourself, without the trouble of painting whole armies of them on parchment. By, by."

"A nun or a Sister of Charity," repeated Magdalen, when, having coldly returned the good-natured shake of the hand which her easily-pacified friend had proffered her, the door had closed upon the Honourable Miss Salusbury. "A nun or a Sister of Charity! why not, indeed?" And she went on, very carefully and deliberately marking in the eyebrows of St. Gengulphus the Great.

"Poor Pendragon!"

Who said "poor Pendragon"? Letitia Salusbury or Magdalen Hill? You see the words are between inverted commas, so the exclamation can't be mine.

The Amazon's "trap," a pretty little phaeton, with two prettier piebald ponies, and a diminutive groom in gray-and-black livery, and perhaps the tiniest buckskins and top-boots ever seen since the visit of General Tom Thumb to this country, awaited their mistress on the lawn before The Casements. Letitia was very anxious before she took the reins, and settled herself on the high cushion of the vehicle, to know if Twitters had had his beer. Twitters was the Lilliputian groom; and he, smacking his lips, made answer that he had had a pint of the right sort, but that it might have been a trifle older. Miss Salusbury delighted in this Twitters. He was so charmingly wicked, she said. He was, indeed, a most precocious imp. He betted; his talk was essentially "horsey;" he was the proprietor of a terrier which could be backed to kill a maximum of rats in a minimum of minutes, and which had been favourably noticed in the sporting journals; and when his mistress was at a loss for a line in the "Ratcatcher's Daughter," she would turn round to Twitters and seek his infallible aid.

Chalkstonehengist was towards St. Becketsbury, and thither the Amazon drove at a smart trot. Just where another road turns off in the direction of Tiburnhurst is a blackened and jagged stump of timber; and here, according to the legend, once stood the gibbet where, a hundred and fifty years ago, had swung in a grisly apparatus of chains the corpse of an atrocious murderer. By this spot of ill omen there stood a short, broad-shouldered man with his arms folded. He raised his hat, and, with a grim bow, would have turned down the Tiburnhurst road, but for the adjuration of, "Hillo there!" by which Miss Salusbury commanded him to stop.

"Why, it's Pendragon," she cried. "Come over to the house and have some lunch. Don't stand staring there, man, like a stuck pig. Get in."

No other young lady in the neighbourhood would have dared to ask a clergyman to enter the phaeton which she was driving; and had any dared to do so, the pendulum of scandal would have so incessantly wagged between Swordsley and St. Becketsbury, that one might have thought the

perpetual motion had been discovered. But Miss Salusbury frankly owned that she did not care one brass farthing for public opinion, and that she would do what she liked when she liked. There was perhaps some consideration due to what might be said concerning the curate's acceptance of the proposition; but ladies who do as they like are not much in the habit of considering the interests of other people. At any other time, Ruthyn Pendragon would have felt bound to decline the invitation. As it was, perhaps for sundry good reasons of his own, he chose to accept it now, and took his seat beside Miss Salusbury. As he said never a word, that young lady chose to inform him that he was as "grumpy" as ever. Then she adjured the piebalds to "come up." Then she entered into a short conversation with Twitters relative to a new collar for Betty the near piebald, and the propriety of putting a kicking-strap on Harlequin the off one;—he was vicious when separated from his companion—when she drove him in the tax-cart. For the Honourable Letitia delighted in driving a neat vehicle under duty, on the conspicuous sides of which were painted the style and titles of Lancelot Brian De Crux Salusbury, Viscount Chalkstonehengist, of Chalkstonehengist, Kent.

They reached the house, and had lunch; the Amazon proving by ocular demonstration that she had a keen appetite for game-pie, and fully understood the flavour of old Madeira. Then she took the curate to her own little boudoir, with the carved oak fittings and the walls hung with antlers, brushes, guns, fishing-rods, eel-spears, whips, spurs, and similar sporting gear.

"We don't allow pipes here," she said quite gravely, and without the slightest touch of irony. "Papa even objected to Mr. Neigherry's hubblebubble. You know:—the yellow man who was so long in India, and talks about pig-sticking and tiger-hunting so well, though every other word he says is a crammer, I do believe. You can have a cigar, if you like; but, for my part, I think they make the curtains smell much worse than pipes do. Mrs. Major Kanaster at St. Becketsbury says so too."

Pendragon, who had not spoken ten words since he entered the house, respectfully declined the cigar. He had definitively given up smoking, he said.

"Is there any thing else you have given up," asked Letitia, in a dry voice.

"I am going away," he said, for all explanation.

"Then you've had a quarrel"—she was nearly saying a "row"—"with the reverend."

"It is so," he answered, bowing his head sadly.

"Where are you going?"

"To London."

"What to do?" It is melancholy to have to record it, but Letitia was within an ace of asking "what's your game?"

"To work."

"That's right," said the heiress. "I only wish I could work at

something. And so you are going. Poor old Pendragon. Poor old fellow. I know all about it. Give us your hand."

She held out her honest palm and left it in the curate's grasp, while he pressed it long and cordially. He looked in her face, and saw nothing in that wild, wilful face but truth and generosity. He would have liked to have kissed her.

"You are a good woman," he murmured, going towards the door. "God bless you."

"Stop," cried Letitia hastily; "London's a long way off, Pendragon, and the pigs have left off running ready roasted through the streets. Do you want any money?"

"I have enough and to spare," the curate made answer, after expressing his gratitude for the offer.

"Well, if you ever do want any money," she resumed, "write to me, under cover to papa. You *will* go? Well, good by, Pendragon."

She gave him her hand again, and again he pressed it and departed. She watched him long from her window striding towards the spot where she had met him. When his form had disappeared, she took up a book,—it was Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*,—and tried to read, but the letters danced before her eyes, and she flung the volume down. Then she took up a parchment portfolio and ran through her collection of salmon flies, gorgeous in pheasant's feathers and yellow floss silk and golden wire. And then she threw herself into a chair, and burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

"A good cry always does me good when I've got the blues," she said, drying her eyes. "Poor Pendragon! I wish I was a man, or a dressmaker, or a charwoman, or a fairy, or any thing else that would enable me to help him; but it's no good; and now I think I'll go and see how Brindle gets on." Brindle was the newest-imported Alderney calf in the byre, and the Honourable Miss Salusbury forthwith proceeded to inspect him.

As for the curate, he walked past the old gibbet stump and past The Casements, towards whose glancing windows he never looked, and to his lodgings in Swordsley village. His rent was paid. His chattels had already been sent to the St. Becketsbury Station, and then to one farther up the line towards London. He purposed to reach this station by a circuitous route of about eight miles. There was no leave-taking to be got through. He had strictly enjoined his landlady to keep his departure a secret for at least twenty minutes after he was clear of the town; and the good woman, who loved him, promised to obey. Words of hot displeasure, of furious wrath, had passed between him and Ernest. Each had said things which he would gladly have recalled. It was too late now. The notice he might have demanded had been foregone by mutual consent. The curate was paid the balance of his wages, and was free to go wheresoever he listed.

The station he was bound for was Tiburnhurst; but by a long walk

round he could reach it without retracing his steps and passing The Casements again. He had to leave the Church of St. Mary-la-Douce, which lay at the back of the village, to his left. He halted as he wound round the grassy knoll on whose summit the timeworn fabric stood.

"In that gray and crumbling fane," the curate murmured low, as with arms folded he gazed long and earnestly at the church, "I have prayed and I have preached, when my lord the rector would grant me his high permission. There I have married, and buried, and christened. There is no grave in that yard that holds a corse more dead than I am to that which I once was. And my lord rector and my lady Magdalen have trampled on the wretched curate, have they? Old Church," he finished, raising his right hand almost menacingly, "the struggle is henceforth between you and me."

And so Ruthyn Pendragon turned his face away from the Church of England, and went on his journey, whitherwards he deemed best. And I have heard a wise man say that what is said to be done for Conscience-sake is often done for Spite.

CHAPTER XII.

NO SCIENCE TO MR. SIMS IS A MYSTERY.

It was the last Tuesday in the month of May 1851; and Mr. Sims, having business to transact in Coger's Inn, Strand, betook himself thither at about ten o'clock on a sunshiny morning. He eyed those who passed him, as was his wont, narrowly; yet he seemed with his bent-down eyes to be occupied in counting the number of iron plates in the pavement that covered the coal-holes. It should be mentioned that Mr. Sims was accustomed to wear a broad-brimmed hat, which was convenient for many reasons, and that his eyes possessed the faculty of looking round corners.

Sixteen months, or thereabouts, had elapsed since we last had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Sims; and he was then going to the play. He was bent on the same errand now, although the theatres do not usually open their doors at ten o'clock in the morning. But the whole of human life was a play to Mr. Sims, and he was always, to use a gallicism, "assisting" at the representations of the Theatre Royal Humanity. He did not care to be a conspicuous actor on the noisy stage thereof. He was content to be Signor N. N., *non nominato*, as the Opera play-bills call the illustrious incogniti who, in a bar and a half of recitative, announce that the coach is at the door, or that the fatal hour has arrived. Or rather he liked to be prompter, or to have the care of the trap-door department, or to stand patiently at the wing with a pan of blue fire, waiting to light up the last scene with a lurid glare.

Time had not thinned the flowing locks of Mr. Sims. He had none that flowed for the Great Gleaner to operate upon. Nature had provided him with a close-set and spiky black caul of hair, much resembling a

horsehair cushion. Time had inserted, since January '50, a few thousand spikes of rusty gray among the sable stubble, and on the crown of his head had mown a little circular tonsure quite bald. His nose was a little more peaked, and a trifle more purple in hue, and that was all.

Mr. Sims came from the west, and set his watch by the Horse Guards. The watch very much resembled the model of a potato in silver, and the disc which prudent housewives sometimes slice off that esculent, to allow the steam to escape while boiling, was represented by the dial. It had belonged to a railway engine-driver, and to it was attached a history. At the corner of St. Martin's Lane it is on record that Mr. Sims purchased a pennyworth of apples. There is nothing so very strange in this fact; but it may be just hinted that Mr. Sims entered into a somewhat lengthy conversation with the fruit-seller, who was an Irishwoman of the purest growth, and earned a considerable addition to her weekly income by colouring cutty pipes for gentlemen whose heads were too weak to allow them to swallow about an ounce of nicotine every day. A clean pipe, half a pound of the strongest tobacco, half-a-crown, and a week's fair smoking, given to Biddy McGrath, and she would colour a cutty for you as black as my hat.

"Five times within a fortnight, eh?" said Mr. Sims as he turned down King William Street. "For watching closely, and never losing a minute, there's nothing like an apple-woman. She never moves, and nobody suspects her. For following, give me an orange-girl." So you see that Mr. Sims did business even as he walked.

In mid-Strand Mr. Sims held brief parley with a Hansom cabman, which ended in that charioteer giving him a ticket, receiving a shilling, laying his forefinger by the side of his nose, and driving on. Had Mr. Sims designed to take a drive any where, and had he suddenly changed his mind? At all events, he reached Coger's Inn on foot, and entering the open doorway of No. 20, mounted briskly to the third floor.

Coger's Inn is not in the Strand, but off it, and is about the dingiest, rottenest old inn of chancery in the metropolis. It should have been pulled down a century since; but as, let out in tenements, it realises a considerable and tolerably safe annual rental, its proprietors—whoever they may be—have excellent reasons for allowing it to stand. The windows are never cleaned; the staircases are never swept; the mangy old courtyard is never weeded or rolled. It is a sandy desert in fine weather, and a miry puddle in wet weather. It was a place of legal habitations once, but very few men of the law care to abide in it now. Its tenants are all cloudy and mysterious. They come nobody knows whence, and go nobody knows where. They have slips of foolscap pasted on their doors, saying that they will be "back in five minutes;" return in ten years, paste a fresh slip over the old one, saying that they will be "back in a quarter of an hour," and never return at all. Letters fall through the slits of the door, and moulder away there; cats die of starvation, and the

crannies of lonely chambers are fusty with the skeletons of mice. It would be a bold flea that took up his quarters within those pinched precincts, thinking to live on the fat of the land, or of the lodgers, and hoping to drink his pint of blood a day like a gentleman. Coger's Inn was the very place to suit Mr. Sims, and for that reason he had chambers there.

The third-floor back, No. 20, had a huge outer door, which was a mass of knobs and staples, and iron bands and plates, and great cross-beams of oak. You might have murdered a man behind that door, and nobody on the staircase would have been the wiser for it; nor, if by holding the ear to the letter-slit, the screams of the dying man had been heard, could any one without a dozen sledge-hammers, or an engineer's petard, have burst the massive portal open. When Mr. Sims had reached this door, and produced his latch-key, he tapped one of the iron plates approvingly with that instrument, remarking, in a satisfied under-tone, that it (meaning the door) was uncommonly strong, and quiet, and safe. The key looked large enough to have fitted the great door of Newgate, and to it, by a piece of red tape, was attached a tiny little Chubb that might have opened a lady's portfolio or a pocket-ledger. Mr. Sims applied the big key, which made a noise of mingled ferocity and anger as it was turned twice or thrice round in the lock, and so passed in to his chambers. It has been omitted to state, that in the midst of the mass of iron and oak forming the door, was painted in faded white letters the name of "Filoe and Co." Whether Mr. Sims was Filoe and Co., or Filoe and Co. had once lived there, but had left the place a quarter of a century since, or the day before yesterday, is uncertain and immaterial.

There was an inner door, panelled, smooth, and knockerless, and with the minutest of keyholes, to which Mr. Sims applied his Chubb, and was fairly within his premises. He who was behind the smooth-panelled door might have seen that it was backed by one solid sheet of iron. "An Englishman's house is his castle," soliloquised Mr. Sims; "and, egad, I think Coger's Castle would stand a pretty strong siege."

Mr. Sims's chambers comprised three rooms, each with a single window, through whose infinitely dirty panes could be faintly descried an agreeable perspective of roofs and chimney-pots. For this was the third-floor back, and the background of Coger's Inn was Cadger's Market. The rooms were *en suite*; and as Mr. Sims stood at the first one he heard a great noise of scuffling and stamping, the clatter of some metallic substance, and the sound of a human voice, crying,

"Saha! Saha! there! Come on, three, six, twelve of you! Come on, ye wolves! Buffalmacco the Ruthless never yields!"

Mr. Sims did not seem in the least disconcerted by this strange discourse, but entered the room, which was low and dusty, very bare of furniture, but, with what little there was, of a counting-house character; and in the centre of whose carpetless floor stood a tall youth about seventeen, marked with the small-pox, and endowed with a shock head of hair of the hue that may be called a fine sunset, inasmuch as it was flaming red.

He was stamping very violently on the deal boards, and brandishing an old broadsword, and occasionally dealing a sounding thwack to an office-desk, adjuring some imaginary enemy, by the name of Spadacapo, to "come on."

"At it again, Buff," Mr. Sims tranquilly remarked. "Where are the letters, and has any body called?"

"Buffalmacco the Ruthless," or Buff, as by default of any better name I must call him, was almost breathless with excitement and the broadsword exercise. He did not appear at all ashamed in being detected in his strange occupation, but, leaning on the hilt of his weapon, informed his master that there was a heap of letters in the next room, and that nobody had called except the Gas, who had looked at the meter, and found that they had only burned eighteenpennyworth during the last quarter.

"And quite enough, too, Buff," Mr. Sims cheerfully remarked. "When gas is given away, we will burn more of it. As I'm going to be very busy for the next hour, you will oblige me by suspending your infernal row during that period; after which, I will see any body who calls."

Mr. Sims passed through the second room, which was entirely empty, unless a huge splash of ink in the middle of the floor could be called furniture. He entered the third room, his own private *sanctum*, and carefully locked the door, leaving, according to his already-mentioned principle, the key therein. Buffalmacco the Ruthless being temporarily prohibited from indulging in the broadsword exercise, betook himself to his library, which, in a very greasy, tattered, and coverless condition, stood on a shelf by the window, and consisted of copies of the exciting dramas of *The Castle Spectre*, *Jonathan Bradford*, and *The Iron Chest*, an odd volume of the *Newgate Calendar*, the *Sam-Hall Songster*, and sundry numbers of a thrilling romance entitled *Murder Castle, or the Heads of the Headless*. Buff had commenced taking in *The Hatchet of Horror*; or, *Love and Madness*; but he found *Murder Castle* more attractive, and so dropped the Hatchet.

"An invaluable boy, that," Mr. Sims said, taking off his plain black frock, and donning a dressing-gown of gray striped flannel. "He lives in the realms of fancy and the Victoria Theatre. His wages enable him to go four times a week to the upper gallery, and he is happy. He could rob me if he liked very conveniently, but he is scrupulously honest. So long as he has enough for the gallery, thousands might pass through his hands without a penny sticking to his fingers. I know it, for time out of mind I have laid traps for him. Here's one, for instance." And from a pyramid of at least two hundred and fifty penny-post letters Sims turned up one, the seal of which he carefully broke, and, from several thicknesses of paper in the envelope, took out twenty-four postage-stamps. Mr. Sims had himself posted this letter to himself on the preceding afternoon; but he had been careful to have the address written in a strange hand. He usually tried this little manoeuvre about four or five times every

week, always selecting a different handwriting, and had never found one of his letters miscarry.

"Here's another little test," muttered Mr. Sims as he opened another letter, and, peering anxiously into its enclosure, took forth, with the greatest caution, a human hair, which he held up for an instant to the light, and then blew away.

"Letters may be unsealed and resealed," thought Mr. Sims; "but if I tell my correspondent, by word of mouth, to pluck out one of his hairs and pop it into the envelope before he sends it, I don't think it very probable that a letter would be opened without the hair being displaced."

Mr. Sims said, luckily, none of this aloud, else Buffalmacco the Ruthless might by chance have heard the things he should not. Mr. Sims addressed himself to his own inner self, and hugged his secrets in his own secretive bosom. He continued opening letters until long past the hour of which he had spoken had expired, when a discreet tap was heard at the door, accompanied by a more discreet cough.

"What is it, Buff?" he asked, opening the door to the red-headed youth.

"She's here," the fencing clerk, if clerk he was, responded, and pointing with his thumb over his left shoulder.

"Phew!" and Mr. Sims gave utterance to a prolonged whistle. "Dear me, Mrs. Clapperton," he continued, pushing past Buff, and eagerly ushering a handsomely-attired lady into his sanctum, "to what may I ascribe the honour of this unexpected visit?"

He knew very well, did Mr. Sims, that the handsomely-attired lady's name was not Mrs. Clapperton. Perhaps Buffalmacco the Ruthless knew it quite as well; but it was the invariable practice with Mr. Sims never to address a client who called upon him by his or her proper name. It kept things so snug, he was wont to say. The handsomely-attired lady was a client of Mr. Sims, and her name was Mrs. Armytage. She was out of mourning, and looked prettier than ever.

"*Fait-il gros temps dans la chiourme?*" asked Mr. Sims,—what necessity was there for him to speak French?—when he had handed the lady to a chair, had locked the door and left the key inside. "Is it business? or is it on purely sentimental grounds that we are come to see our Sims, all in the morning early? Has the obdurate heart at Hoogendracht relented?"

"It is not that," replied Mrs. Armytage; "the heart you speak of is as hard, and I am as wretched as ever."

She looked more scared and terrified than she had done at the room in the hotel that night.

"Then there is a red lamp out; where is the danger?"

"I want five hundred pounds."

"Five hundred jars of pickled gherkins! Why, to my certain knowledge, ma'am, you had five thousand pounds at your banker's only yesterday."

"I know that, but I want five hundred pounds directly: this instant."

"Draw a cheque, then. Here are pens, ink, and paper."

"It's of no use, he won't take it."

"Who won't take it?"

"Sims, I want five hundred pounds. Let me have them at once, for mercy's sake, or all is over."

"Is it a real smash?" Mr. Sims asked searchingly.

"It is ruin and despair. You know that I never lie to you."

"I don't think you do; but you keep back the truth till the last moment, which is quite as bad; and then the train shunts away on the branch line that leads to smash, and after that we come to our Sims and eat humble pie."

"Will you give me the money?"

"I haven't got it. I've only a bunch of keys, sevenpence halfpenny, and half an Abernethy biscuit,—my breakfast, ma'am,—in my pocket, and eight pounds fourteen in postage-stamps. It has been a joyful delivery this morning."

"Draw me a cheque, then."

"You know I never draw cheques myself. I have a blank one, however, with somebody else's name to it; but where's the use of it? He won't take a cheque."

"Yes he will, with a line from you."

"Who will?"

"His man is down-stairs."

"Whose?"

"Tigg's."

"Ephraim Tigg of Stockwell!" Mr. Sims repeated, with another prolonged whistle; "I thought so. And so you've found out again that he's a Rasper, have you?"

"Will you let me have the money?"

"I must, ma'am," responded Mr. Sims, shrugging his shoulders. "I can't afford to let the concern go to smash, although, if this kind of business continues, I shall be obliged to take my capital out of the firm. Why on earth can't you come and see me before you pay that walking museum of the College of Surgeons a visit, instead of afterwards? Did your Sims ever refuse you the genial loan?"

"I can't help it," said Mrs. Armytage, with a murmur that was half a groan.

"I don't think you can," observed Mr. Sims, scanning her from beneath his eyebrows, as from a huge leathern pocket-book he produced a blank cheque, and filled it up. "There, Ephraim will take Filoe and Co.'s signature, particularly if I put this upon it."

He made a minute tick in the corner of the cheque, partly with a pen, partly with his nail, and handed the document to her.

"You have a flying pen, ma'am," he observed calmly, "and the bump of imitation ought to be strongly developed somewhere among those pretty

curls ; but I think that mark will puzzle even *you*, my lady. I suppose you don't want me any more, till the next time ; but take care. It's a long lane that has no turning ; and, as sure as my name's Des — Sims, I mean,—the very next thoroughfare on the wrong-hand side is C. C. C. Street."

She had scarcely heard his concluding remark. She crumpled the cheque in her hand, and walked to the door, and was gone.

"Impulse again," Mr. Sims muttered ; "I thought so. Five times within a fortnight. *La chiourme chauffe*. If that woman doesn't put a stopper on her impulse, it will most inevitably end in the cultivation of the science of botany in the pleasant bay of that name. Buff," he continued, "I'm at home to every body. I think I shall have a harvest this morning."

And Mr. Sims went on opening letters, and taking out postage-stamps.

Eugene Scribe.

It has long been a jest among the Parisians, that in the provinces of France managers attribute, at random, every piece they play to Eugène Scribe. The French provincial managers were, perhaps, not so far out, after all; but if Scribe has sometimes obtained credit in France for more than he has really produced, it may be said, on the other hand, that in England his dramatic works have generally been brought out either anonymously or under some pseudonym, such as Morton or Planché. There is a theatre named after Scribe in Turin. He for many years supported one theatre in his own native city of Paris (that of the Gymnase, or Théâtre de Madonne, as it was then called) entirely with the productions of his own pen, aided by that of his faithful *collaborateur*, M. Germain Delavigne; and during the last half-century no plays have been so much represented in France, England, and all over Europe, as those of the ingenious and fertile dramatist who has just died in Paris, in the seventy-third year of his age, and in the middle of his five hundred and second piece. Eugène Scribe is said to have been brought up to the law, and, by all accounts, it did not take him very long to discover that the profession was not a pleasing one. His father was a mercer, and as Scribe when he died was among the highest and most distinguished society of Paris, it may be said, to borrow an idea from one of his own comedies, that he began with mercers and ended with ministers. He was about twenty years of age when his first dramatic work was brought out; and it is satisfactory to know that his ten first essays for the stage were all damned. How many of us, then, who have not had more than half a dozen failures may still live in hope. We suppose, however, that there were some remarkable signs of talent in the pieces so vigorously condemned by the Parisian public, or managers would not have gone on encouraging the youthful Scribe to write. What the early defeats of the author who afterwards gained victories on half a thousand theatrical battle-fields seem to prove is, that, for the successful exercise of the art of play-writing, a certain apprenticeship is necessary. Of course, no amount of study, prayer, and practice combined will make a merely clever man a great dramatic poet; but we know, from the almost uniform success which attends the dramatic efforts of actors, that, to insure success, the first thing a playwright has to obtain is a full knowledge of the stage, with all its exigencies and capabilities. A great poet or a great wit may, of course, without any special study of the theatre, produce a work which shall succeed by the force of its high literary merit alone; but a man who knows his business as a playwright needs neither wit nor poetry; and certainly neither of these faculties were possessed in any remarkable degree by M. Scribe. { Indeed, scarcely a trace of poetry or even

of genuine humour can be found in one of his works ; and such wit as he sometimes exhibits is neither piercing, nor brilliant, nor new. How many of Victor Hugo's lines have become proverbs ! how many profound remarks a reader of Balzac will quote from his works ! but no one ever cites an ingenious thought or happy observation from Scribe, though every one has seen and applauded Scribe's pieces.

As Scribe, since he came of age, has written for the stage at the rate of about ten pieces a year, we may well say that his whole life was given up to dramatic writing. Probably the most important event in his existence was his reception as a member of the French Academy in 1836. Many were of opinion that his place was not on the benches of the Institute ; and his election gained for him more than one severe attack, directed, not against his talent as a playwright, but against his claims as a man of letters, and as a dramatist in the high sense of the word. "For more than a year," wrote Gustave Planché, "we had been expecting from M. Scribe his speech on the occasion of his reception, and were almost beginning to despair. We were aware of the multiplied occupations, the innumerable and constantly-recurring labours, of the author of *Bertrand et Raton* ; we knew that he undertakes at the same time a comic opera, a ballet, and two or three regular comedies, with or without couplets. It was natural, then, to think that the French Academy was being sacrificed to the dramatic administrations of which M. Scribe is now the providence. The most authentic documents seemed to favour this conjecture ; since the inauguration of *L'Ambitieux*, people spoke at the same time of a piece in five acts for the Comédie Française, of several lyrical poems destined for Madame Damoreau, and of a considerable dramatic supply for the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle ; this was quite enough to absorb all the faculties of the most fertile genius in France. Finally, the active rehearsals of the *Saint Barthélemy* would alone have sufficed to explain the silence of the new academician." However, M. Scribe found time to write his academic discourse between a cavatina and a trio. There was a numerous audience at the Institute on Thursday the 28th of January, the day fixed for the reception of the new member ; and Gustave Planché, giving suddenly a fantastic character to the irony of his article, pretends to have seen among those assembled the familiar types of the numberless comediettas written by M. Scribe for the elegant little theatre on the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle. By the side of the dramatist's legion of collaborators, "modest clients who had wished to accompany their patron into the heart of the senate," might be observed "a swarm of young widows, mistresses at the age of twenty of independent fortunes, and not knowing how to dispose of their hands and hearts : among the ranks of those privileged widows were a few neglected orphans, a few guilty young women burdened with the paternal curse ; but they had forgotten their tears and their remorse, and mixed freely with their companions. At the feet of the enchanting widows were the colonels without regiments who for the last fifteen years have been carrying on successful intrigues

with other ladies." The company assembled to greet M. Scribe ought also, I think, to have included his red-haired, solemn-speaking, punch-drinking, wife-persecuted English lord, who is chiefly conspicuous in *Fra Diavolo*, *Le Domino Noir*, and *Les Diamans de la Couronne*; and, above all, the gipsy, the flower-girl, the vender of oranges, the veiled singer of the streets, who, after appearing in various picturesque disguises (and singing a great deal of very charming music, the composition for the most part of M. Auber), turns out to be a lady of title, or the abbess of a convent, or the Queen of Spain, and who is always more or less a variation of Cervantes' *Gipsy of Madrid*. Gustave Planché, however, surrounds Scribe with such personages as he especially delighted in when he was the great provider of the Gymnase Theatre; and he then goes on to describe the speech of the new member, "whose voice trembled like that of a young scapegrace with an uncle to move, debts to pay, and a cousin to convince." We are told that the exordium resembled the exposition of a sentimental drama, and that "M. Scribe connected his academic glory with his first successes at the Napoleon Lyceum, and even found means to call to his assistance the recollection of his absent mother."

It has often been mentioned, it was not so much to his dramas and comedies as to his operas that M. Scribe owed his election to the French Academy. We believe this notion was originated by M. Scribe himself. At all events, he says as much in the address just referred to, where, having accepted himself as a song-writer, he proceeds to make it his duty to trace the history of the song in French literature, maintaining, curiously enough, that whereas the manners and chief events of each age may be found reflected in its songs, they have had no very marked effect upon its comedies. The first part of this proposition is doubtless true, but the second could be shown to be quite untenable. As regards the latter, let us take only two examples, which will be familiar to most English readers, and ask whether Molière's *Tartuffe* does not belong essentially to a period of priestly domination,—to that in which the Edict of Nantes was revoked,—and whether Beaumarchais's *Marriage of Figaro* is not inseparably connected with the agitated times which immediately preceded the French Revolution? Again, the amorous pleasantries and facetious sentimentalities which make up what is called *marivaudage*, and which, indeed, abound in the dialogue of Marivaux, the inventor and godfather of the style,* show us the tone of the society, which saw their worth and cherished them, quite as plainly as do the contemporaneous pictures of Boucher, Lancret, and all the school of Watteau. M. Scribe puts his proposition in this way—that there is nothing about the revocation of the Edict of Nantes or the wars of Flanders in Molière's comedies; that Destouches, in the *Dissipateur* and in the *Philosophe Marié*, does not relate the orgies of the Regency and the debaucheries of the Parc aux Cerfs. To this M. Villemain, the secretary of the Academy, in his speech of welcome and

* Sophie Arnould characterises Marivaux's wit as "*l'esprit du cœur*."

congratulation, replied politely but pointedly, that if Molière said nothing in his plays about the great historical events of Louis the Fourteenth's reign, he nevertheless had his historical place marked as a writer between La Bruyère and the Duke de Saint Simon; and that if he had not painted the portraits of any individual members of the Court, he had shown himself without mercy for certain types—such as that of the arrogant, insolent marquis, of the inky, pretentious *femme savante*, and of the affected writer and reciter of sonnets. M. Villemain might have added, that in George Dandin and M. Jourdain we see the rich financier of the period, a man who aped the dress and manners of the class above him, when nobles and traders were far from having either the same manners or the same dress—a reflection of that Samuel Bernard, a rich, commonplace, contemptible banker who (as the story is told by St. Simon) lent money to Louis XIV. because he was invited to Versailles, and more money because the King picked up his stick, which in his agitation the money-grubber had let fall, and finally all the money he wanted, because his Majesty condescended, the better to swindle his wealthy victim, to give him his arm. Must not this Samuel Bernard, while torturing himself at home in the vain hope of acquiring those accomplishments which he thought would fit him for a Court which despised him, and what he sprang from, and what surrounded him, and all that he had done,—must not M. Bernard at such moments have strongly resembled M. Jourdain trying on his clothes with his tailor, and studying music, dancing, fencing, philosophy, orthography, and “prose” with his professors? Must not the miserable man, finding no satisfaction in his money, which was quite as much coveted, perhaps, but less honoured than it is now, have longed to ally himself to some noble family, from which at least a certain borrowed respectability might fall upon him; and, by conceiving such a project, would he not at once place himself in the position of George Dandin? Now, if any one is inclined to deny the historical value of comedy, let him ask himself whether and to what extent George Dandin and M. Jourdain—those admirable dramatic types of the “financier” of Louis XIV.'s period—are fair portrayals of the great capitalists and speculators of the present day, such, for instance, as M. Mirès, who, from his relations with the Court, found himself in a somewhat analogous position to that of our friend Samuel Bernard? They are as unlike as the seventeenth century is to the nineteenth. A princely house, that of the Polignacs, did not disdain an alliance with the Mirès family, of which all we are told is, that it was “obscure,” and that the parents of M. Mirès were—not “Jews,” which would be abrupt and uncivil, but—of “the Jewish persuasion”! People speak of M. Mirès even now with a respect which is not often shown to a man after a great fall. Of Rothschild who would dare to speak irreverently—and it would be irreverence to say a word against him—at any time? Money-making has in the present day become the serious occupation of all classes to such an extent, that great capitalists, even if they were ridiculous (which as a class they have ceased to be) would not be ridiculed.

It was natural, however, for M. Scribe to deny the historical importance of comedy, for his own works of this class certainly possess none. We should not think of establishing any lengthy comparison between Scribe and Honoré de Balzac, the Molière of this age, and in whose *Comédie Humaine* every remarkable type of the day is to be found; but we may simply observe that the character of Mercadet, in Balzac's play of that name, considered as a personage of the nineteenth century, is worth all the characters that are to be found in the plays of M. Scribe. It is a mistake, however, to regard M. Scribe as a comedy-writer at all, though he has doubtless produced many cleverly constructed comedies, as he has also produced cleverly constructed novels, and narrative and dramatic scenes of all kinds. Neither should we take M. Scribe at his own word, and regard him as a song-writer; for, in spite of the number of ingenious opera-books that he has given to the world, and the great success they have attained, no one knows him by his songs. He was, above all, a maker of plots; and it was surprising what combinations he could bring about with only a few well-known characters, who from unreal, which they seemed at first, became at last conventionally true, by the mere force of a convention established between the dramatist and his public. His young widows and his colonels might not vary very much (though the colonel, of course, turns up in many pieces as an admiral, or a member of the diplomatic service), but they were always being placed in new positions; and M. Scribe knew more of the permutations and combinations to be effected with half a dozen characters than any dramatist who has lived since Lope da Vega. Say that his personages were like chessmen—varying about as much as the knight and the castle of one pattern will vary from the knight and the castle of another—he was still a most ingenious chess-player, sure of every move he made, and capable of winning the game in five hundred different ways.

A great deal has been said about the fertility of M. Scribe's genius. It, indeed, appears to have been almost without limit, nor can we see any reason why (unless the ordinary faculties of literary execution fail him) a writer who has once produced a hundred plays should not go on producing them to any number of hundreds, just as a maker of puzzles, after constructing a certain number of really good ones, might go on arranging, re-arranging, and modifying them in all sorts of ways. If the dramatist be expected to introduce new live characters into his plays, and to make them talk poetry or wit, or at least to make them utter thoughts or observations, then the question becomes a different one; but there is no reason why the puzzle-maker should not continue to make puzzles (out of parts of other puzzles), and the chess-player to win games at chess (by the ingenious system which has enabled him to win previous games), until puzzle-maker and chess-player become incapable of pursuing any longer their respective arts.

Without going into any lengthened enumeration and consideration of M. Scribe's favourite types, I may mention that the young widow so often

brought up against him, and whom, as a just judge, I have myself been compelled to cite, was nothing less than a necessity for M. Scribe. She is the keystone of his dramatic architectural system; deny him his young, independent widow, make her old, or deprive her of her dead husband, and nearly all his comedies and vaudevilles fall to the ground. The explanation of this is very simple. A young widow in France may say and do all sorts of things which would compromise an unmarried girl in that country, though among most classes they might have no such effect on the reputation of a young lady in England, unless they led to some manifestly bad result. Love-making is a necessary ingredient in plays, and in France love-making is a luxury not permitted to unmarried girls. Hence the great importance of the young widow, not only to M. Scribe, but to all dramatists in France.

Nevertheless some of M. Scribe's *ingénues* may be ranked among his most charming characters; only this is a character to which it is impossible to give any great development in a French play, unless the dramatist either places his heroine in a low position of life, where the proprieties are not observed, and where young people are at liberty to fall in and out of love with one another as often as they please, or introduces a male cousin, whose intimate friendship generally softens into that sort of affection which, among well-regulated persons, tends to matrimony. The hero and heroine of a play cannot always be cousins, and the poor, though they often make sacrifices for one another, do not often "fall in love" as the words are understood by their superiors. Although the passion in question cannot be said to have its origin in idleness, but in all sorts of good qualities (which often get mixed up, somehow or other, with a considerable number of bad ones), yet idleness is the only soil in which it will flourish.

"Fond of a little love, which I call leisure,"

says Byron; and certainly hard work will drive love away; nor with hard work can it find any place in the mind in which to enter. Among the laborious classes practical virtue (which is a very different thing from that ideal virtue which a lazy poet may have constantly before him without ever arriving any where near it) is frequently found; but "love" seems usually to take that comic shape of which the very form proves the thing itself not to be genuine. It may be true regard, and of a far more enduring character than that intoxication of the heart, the brain, and all the senses, which (while it lasts) is "stronger than death, more bitter than the grave;" but it is not what poets and playwrights and M. Scribe have agreed to call "love." People with hard hands, obtuse perceptions, and no susceptibilities, express what they venture to call their "love" (and which is nothing more than a *liking*) by means of pleasantries, acted as well as spoken; they make jokes upon what is essentially not a laughable subject, insult one another pleasantly, and even amorously, no doubt, from their point of view, and sometimes go so far as to exchange blows, though always, of course, in the way of affection. How silently people

make love in drawing-rooms, and how noisily in kitchens! where, if much rumping and shouting are heard, we may always be sure that some "follower" is present, and that he is "keeping company," or "courting," or "paying his addresses," with a little more spirit than usual. The proverb, "*On ne badine pas avec l'amour*," may be translated in two ways. It means that it is dangerous to trifle with love; for which reason the degenerate descendants of Don Juan and Lovelace (feeble and cowardly representatives of their great progenitors) are quite right in the logical, if not in the moral, sense of the word, when, heartless and beyond the reach of injury themselves, they endeavour to engage unsuspecting girls in seemingly harmless, because quasi-facetious, flirtations; and also it may signify, as a mere statement of fact, that *badinage* and love are two very different things, and ought to be kept apart.

And all this to show that, as M. Scribe was obliged to introduce love-making into his pieces, of which the scene was usually laid in good society, and as some of the love-making had, as a matter of course, to end just before the fall of the curtain in a marriage, it was necessary, in the love-making of this latter description, that the young lady to whom love was made should be a widow.

In one of his best pieces (*Une Chaine*) M. Scribe has undertaken to demonstrate what he has casually shown in other works of less importance, that a magnanimous and courageous husband afflicted with a pretty and treacherous wife is not of necessity ridiculous; but that he may still meet with respect, and may even inspire sympathy. This idea, among the French, must at least have had the merit of originality.

The general tone of M. Scribe's works is kindly, and sometimes even genial; but their moral purport is almost always low,—so low as to be almost sure to please the butchers, bakers, stockbrokers, bankers, and other money-grubbers, who form so large a portion of every theatrical audience. He never falls into the error of teaching that riches are undesirable, or that rich men, other qualifications being equal, do not deserve more respect than poor ones; or that honest enthusiasm is of any value as compared with calm self-interest. It is mundane morality from beginning to end that we find in the pieces of M. Scribe, and naturally the whole world was pleased with his moral lessons,—so agreeably, too, as they are conveyed! Any of the first-, second-, and third-rate comic authors who have preceded M. Scribe, having such subjects as charlatanism and cliques to treat, would have shown us those who trusted to such means for their advancement defeated and humiliated in the end; but, in *Le Charlatanisme* and *La Camaraderie* the heroes of the systems in question are made to succeed and prosper. There is no cynicism in the author's manner of exhibiting their triumph (such as may be observed, for instance, in Lesage's *Crispin rival de son Maître*, where two convicted thieves are told that, for their ingenuity, they may hope to obtain some employment under Government); on the contrary, he takes a naive and, as he appears to think, virtuous delight in their having attained their

objects by base means, though, as if conscience-stricken, he hints just at the end of the *Camaraderie*, that if schemers gain the prize of life, it nevertheless needs men of true ability to retain them.

But the best way to regard the pieces of M. Scribe is apart from their moral purport altogether. He teaches so feebly—and, above all, aims so little at teaching—that his lessons are really of no importance. He has, it is true, pointed out in many of his works the inconvenience, if not the sin, of breaking that commandment which (in their novels and dramas at least) the French specially love to transgress; and in a little piece called *La Demoiselle à Marier* he has gone far towards pointing out the remedy for the undesirable relations subsisting between love and marriage in France, by showing how a young girl may sometimes be advantageously left to marry the man of her own choice. But, on the other hand, in the *Mariage d'Argent*, he shows us with great complacency a young girl sacrificed to an old man, applauds the transaction, and has not a word of sympathy or pity for the sincere and passionate lover from whom she is torn away. No one seeks the moral purport of *Les Diamans de la Couronne*, *Le Domino Noir*, and the rest of M. Scribe's operas, any more than he examines into their probability; nor should we look much for either (and certainly not for the former at all) in his comedies and *comédie-vaudevilles*. They are models of construction, and are pleasantly written, though, according to the best French critics, very incorrectly. On that point, however, it would not become an Englishman to express an opinion.

The anecdotes told about and in connection with M. Scribe are very numerous. How could it well be otherwise in the case of a popular author who had been half a century before the public, in a country where anecdote-making is almost a serious branch of literature? The first we shall mention relates to his private life, for which reason, no doubt, it has been told more frequently in the French papers than any of the others. It appears that M. Scribe got married much in the same way as one of his own heroes, and that he even married a widow. After such a union, he was obliged more than ever to continue to introduce the *jeune veuve* into his pieces, otherwise his malicious friends (and whose friends are not sometimes malicious?) would have said that Scribe had only ceased admiring young widows after marrying one. Scribe behaved better to his *jeune veuve*—who, when he first met her, was a young married woman—than most of his colonels and diplomatists would have done. One day, as he was going into the office of his notary, he met, coming out of it, a lady whose beauty and whose sadness equally impressed him. The notary informed his client that the lady he so much admired, and for whom he felt so much sympathy, had come to him on an errand which could not possibly be successful—she wished to borrow money for her husband, who was in great difficulties and had no security to offer. M. Scribe instructed the man of law to advance the sum needed on his (the dramatist's) account, but as if in the ordinary way of business, and from the

office-funds.* A few years afterwards, the husband of M. Scribe's fair creditor was kind enough to die, but not until he had recovered his position, and had amassed sufficient money to enable his wife, on accepting the marital inheritance, to defray at once all the debts of the estate. The *jeune veuve*, when, like the *jeunes veuves* of the Gymnase, she had completed her period of mourning, called upon M. Scribe, to whom she had at last been referred by the notary. M. Scribe knew better than any one how the little three-act drama in which he now found himself engaged, and of which the second act was already "on," ought to terminate, and he finished it in real life as he would have finished it had it all been a fiction for the stage. "My life is such a tedious drama," said Rivarol, "that I sometimes fancy it must have been written by Mercier."† "The principal event of my life is mixed up with such a dramatic little intrigue, that it reminds me of one of my own pieces for the Gymnase," Scribe might have said. And if any one had objected to him that the Gymnase *répertoire* was not true to life, he might have replied that at least life had shown itself true to the *répertoire* of the Gymnase.

All the anecdotes that one hears of M. Scribe testify to the excellence of his heart. A charming one is told of his conduct to the widow of a *collaborateur* (always widows!) who had assisted him in writing a piece which, when it was brought out, utterly failed. The *collaborateur*, tired of an unsuccessful career, or for some other reason, died, and his wife for years afterwards continued to receive money from the agent of the Dramatic Authors' Association, on account of her late husband's share in a piece which had only lived a few nights. "It is astonishing," the poor lady was in the habit of saying, "how a piece which is not liked at all in Paris will sometimes be played night after night in the provinces. There is my poor dear husband's ———, for instance," &c. Scribe could have explained the seeming paradox if he had felt inclined.

I do not, even after having read the entire collection of M. Scribe's works for the Gymnase, believe that virtue is uniformly rewarded in this world, or, at least, not in a worldly manner and according to our worldly ideas. On one occasion, however, M. Scribe's life was saved by his benevolence, as clearly as was Stradella's by his admirable singing, and under similar circumstances. Lacenaire, the most cynical and dangerous assassin of modern times (he said of himself in the condemned cell, "*Je suis né assassin comme on naît poète*"), had gained admittance into M. Scribe's room by representing himself as a literary man in distress. He knew well that *that*, if any thing, would cause this good man's door to be opened to him; and he afterwards confessed—or rather he boasted—that

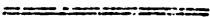
* And yet it has been said that Scribe had no originality! "*Original dans tout ce que tu fais!*" said Heine to Berlioz, who had come to see him on his death-bed; and there was decided moral originality in Scribe's honourable and disinterested conduct to this lady.

† Who probably wrote dramas quite as good as Rivarol's *Marchand de Smyrne*, and who at least was the author of an admirable book, the *Tableau de Paris*.

he intended to murder him and rob him. Scribe, however, received him with a kindness which probably surprised him, also he gave him at once a hundred francs; and, somehow or other, the ferocious beast was unable to strike the meditated blow. He never, however, admitted in plain terms that his heart was touched by Scribe's conduct; and, when questioned about this affair in his last prison (where he was visited by numerous criminal amateurs of both sexes), merely observed, that if Scribe had been a moment longer without giving him the hundred francs, he would have had his blood.

What more is to be said about Eugène Scribe that is not to be found in his numerous biographies, and even in our own journals of the last few weeks? To return once more to his artistic worth, though Scribe has written nothing really great, the French, in losing him, lose their best dramatist; while the adapters of England are at the same time deprived of the most prolific author they ever robbed.

S. E.



Herodias.

“And she, being instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.”—MATTHEW xiv. 8.

In yon proud chamber, cool and still,
 The maid and mother meet—
 Whilst yet the dance's joyous thrill
 Throbs in those fairy feet.
 The damsel prattles, as a bird
 In April sunshine sings;
 But scarcely half her tale was heard,
 When up that mother springs—

“No, child, I was not there to see ;
 But is he thus well pleased ?
 And hath he bound himself to thee ?
 Why then my soul is eased.
 The emerald brooch, the opal ring,
 Ask of some other hand ;
 To clench the promise of a king,
 What kings can give, demand.

“Let time to come send gems and gold,—
 On whispering love they wait ;
 This precious hour is mine, I hold
 And claim it all, for hate.
 A head which God, forsooth, hath sown
 With seeds of power and light,
 Is costlier, sure, than any stone,—
 We'll have that head to-night.

“What ? faint and white ? what, dost thou dare
 To gasp a girlish ‘No’ ?
 Is, then, thy spirit light as air,
 Thy blood but coloured snow ?
 Off with that wan, imploring face,
 Those arms which hang round me,
 Like the false growth, whose mock embrace
 But kills its nurturing tree.

"The venom of the man I hate
 Fell on us both alike,
 Kind heaven hath armed thy hand with fate,
 And yet thou wilt not strike.
 Why, then with idle words have done,
 Keep idler tears aloof,
 And waste not shows of love on one
 Who seeks a single proof.

"Lo! from its secret shrine, I bring
 This vessel rich and rare;
 Kept sacred, from each meaner thing,
 A prophet's head to bear.
 To yon crowned dastard speed like fire,
 Who knows not what he swore;
 Wring from that oath my soul's desire,
 Or see my face no more."

The maid had come, in maiden mirth,
 To greet that mother mild;
 Whose tenderness, e'en from her birth,
 Had never failed the child.
 Can this be she, with fevered breath,
 Which blood alone can slake,
 Whose triumph, in that glance of death,
 Sits like the hooded snake?

Forth shot, from that electric eye,
 Through each young vein a chill,
 Palsying the heart, and freezing dry
 The fountains of the will.
 The very sense of self grew numb,
 As by some spell destroyed,
 Whilst alien thoughts, unslackening, come
 To throng the dreamlike void.

Against their rushing floods of strength,
 The soul that seemed her own,
 Like a spent swimmer, droops at length,
 Engulfed and overthrown;
 And still, to every sobbing prayer,
 The savage face she met,
 Glared, in its gloomy rancour there,
 More overmastering yet.

Then died of her despair the cry,
The wail of her remorse,
Beat down unheard, and silenced by
The stormier passion's force.
So fitful gusts, whose shuddering moan
Before the tempest creeps,
Are crushed and quenched, whilst from his throne
The conquering thunder leaps.

The charger to her head rose slow,
Embossed with golden flowers;
And, with a step that seemed to go
Rolled on by outward powers,
She glided, ghost-like, from the hall,
Into the twilight gray,
As noiseless as the stars that fall
Glide into gloom away.

The woman watched with haughty sneer,
Till, all at once, the roar
Of the long revel, sounding near,
Sunk down, and rose no more.
"That silence speaks," she murmured then;
"The toils are round thee now;
Too weak to have it said of men,
That Herod breaks his vow."

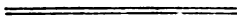
Then, pressing down her deep desire,
She strode across the room;
The shuttle, from her touch of fire,
Hissed through the shivering loom.
That steady hand, that eye of power,
Worked fiercely, firm, and true;
Leaf after leaf, each woven flower,
Beneath her fingers grew.

Tumult arose, with anger blent,
She did not seem to heed;
But boiled like one whose hours hard spent
Can just her children feed.
Faint steps at length were heard to beat,
Chill'd arms around her clung;
And, reddening those remorseless feet,
The loaded charger rung.

The woman raised her ghastly prize,
Looked long, but looked in vain;
To find, within those placid eyes,
Some trace of fear or pain.
Warm, on the milk-white marble floor,
Broad drops of crimson fell;
She watched them curdle into gore,
And coldly said, " 'Tis well !"

Men left their fields half tilled, next morn,
Half pruned their spreading vines ;
To lift in prayer their hands forlorn,
And weary Heaven for signs.
It seemed as if the Lord of Hosts
No longer cared to reign;
Whilst Israel mourned, throughout her coasts,
That more than Prophet slain.

F. H. DORR.



A Word to Women.

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

ONE of the inevitable and invariable results consequent on the advancement of learning, cultivation, civilisation, in short, is the rising up of new difficulties in the form of social questions, intricate problems infinitely difficult to solve, yet, for the most part, loudly demanding such solution, on peril of their seriously impeding the march of progress.

"Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward," but man is also born to fight against and, as far as God sees fit, to overcome trouble; and the same Book that gives this little encouraging picture of man's position on the earth says also, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

And, to revert to authorities of a widely different character, "*Si c'est possible, c'est fait; si c'est impossible, cela se fera,*" said Calonne to Marie-Antoinette; "*Impossible?—ne me dites jamais cette bête de mot!*" shouted Mirabeau, in answer to the remonstrance of his overworked secretary.

So, starting with the admission that the matter I am—with real humility and an almost painful sense of the difficulty of properly treating it—about to touch upon is among the most problematical of these social questions, yet with profound conviction maintaining that the difficulties are not, and never were, and never will be, impossibilities, I proceed to add another chapter to the old, old Book—the first part of which was commenced beneath the Tree of Knowledge, the second part in the manger at Bethlehem, which has been continued through every succeeding generation, and is in our own day being brought out in a new, enlarged, and improved edition, with numerous illustrations, comments, and suggestions by the best authors.

I wish I could conceal from myself, and from you all, the distressing fact that, much light and truth and sense as have been brought to bear on the subject, the very name of the Woman's Question has not yet ceased entirely to provoke a feeling of ridicule or weariness. And still more earnestly do I wish that we women had not been the originators of such feelings by our follies, our discontents, our pretensions to "rights," and "privileges" utterly unsuited to our physical and mental idiosyncrasies, while displaying the utmost neglect and wilful ignorance with regard to such duties and functions as we, and we alone, were intended to perform, and are therefore gifted by nature with the power of performing.

"Man has not done us justice," has long been the cry. Maybe so. But we have done ourselves infinitely greater injustice, and in many—shall I say in most?—instances have provoked him to ignore our higher qualities by generally displaying to him our lower ones.

And now that we are, let us hope, becoming a little wiser,—that we

are beginning in some slight degree to understand where the real evils of our position lie,—that we are disposed to ask only such improvements in our condition as it really and very urgently requires,—I think we find, on the part of our “lords,” our “tyrants,” our “masters,” a growing disposition to listen to us, to examine into our claims and necessities, and to afford us real aid in the struggle (which must yet, however, under the best of circumstances, be a long and arduous one) to take our proper place in the scale of creation.

But let us always bear this in mind. Man can do nothing—absolutely, literally *nothing*—if we do not render ourselves capable of profiting by his aid; vain will it be for him to water the soil, if we have neglected to sow it.

The fact is, that we are, for the most part, wofully brought up from the beginning. Few, very few, of us are ever properly and steadily and judiciously educated, with a view to our capacities, our individualities, and the talents or qualities it is probable we shall be afforded opportunity to turn to the best account in our maturity. We rarely learn any thing thoroughly; we are made smatterers; our faculties are half cultivated, our minds, not at all.

In England, where what Jean Paul calls “daughterful houses” abound, and where, generally speaking, little or nothing will fall to the share of each girl at the parents’ death, it would seem that the commonest of common sense would keep in mind this eventuality, and that in bringing up these girls care would be taken to render them, as far as possible, fit; if not to secure their own maintenance, at all events helpful, rational creatures; ready to do their utmost in the struggle before them, prepared to take the evil with the good; and, instead of remaining inert or complaining burdens on society, to show themselves willing and able to second and render available all efforts public or private charity may be disposed to make in their favour.

Is this the case? I wish I could think that, in any class of life, one family in a hundred was so brought up. Having looked on the imaginary picture, we must turn regretfully to the real one; taking, to begin with, examples among the middle class, on the whole the most important in social questions of this nature, not only from their actual position, but from the powerful influence, direct and indirect, they are capable of exercising on the class below them.

Mr. M. is in business in the City, or he is in one of the liberal professions. He has a capital that yields a yearly income of, say, five hundred a year; and his business or his profession brings him in, on an average, seven hundred more. On this sum he lives very comfortably. He has a pretty house and garden near a railway-station, some ten or twelve miles out of town; three, or perhaps four, servants; maybe a pony-chaise, or a neat little “trap” of some kind; and, when so disposed, he gives pleasant little dinners of eight or ten, more or less well served with good wines; and now and then a dance for the girls. For Mr. M. has girls, six—

it may be eight of them; but we will say six, to keep within ordinary limits.

And now let us see how the Misses M. are brought up to live to-day, and to view to-morrow.

They possess, one with another, average capacities, but considerable divergences of disposition and temperament, and various capabilities. Martha has a decided taste, and even talent, for drawing, but not the faintest aptitude for music. Mary, on the other hand, really loves it, has a good voice, a good ear, a fine touch, and might be trained to considerable proficiency, but can't draw a stroke. Kate has a turn for making all sorts of ingenious and useful and tasteful things with her fingers. Jane's housewifely qualities are well marked. Bessy has a clear head, a retentive memory, and a love for graver pursuits; and Anne is tender and skilful among children and sick folk. None of them, however, are very pretty, or particularly attractive,—some rather the reverse; and when their father dies they will have next to nothing.

And now, how do they "envisage," as the French say, this position?

A smattering of music, drawing, history, geography, languages, &c., &c., is impartially bestowed on all alike. Mrs. M. wishes her daughters to be "accomplished," but she does not at all desire they should play or sing or paint like "professionals," or, in other words, well; and besides, they will be sure to leave off all that when they are married. No lady can turn the work of her hands to account without a loss of dignity; so Kate's mechanical genius is only to be employed on paper-flowers, doll-dressing, card-baskets, and other dust-collectors, as presents for her friends. When she marries, she can make pretty things for her children. It is no use to teach Jane housekeeping: people learn to keep house when they marry. Bessy must not be encouraged in dry study—a pedantic woman no one likes—it is unfeminine to know too much; men don't like a blue-stocking, and when she is married she will have plenty to do besides reading dry books. As to Anne, thank Goodness she is not likely to be a nursery governess or a monthly nurse; so she may keep her abilities in those lines till she is married and has to attend to her own children.

And so these girls' peculiar gifts are utterly neglected; a few faint, crude, totally unpractical, and generally disconnected, notions on the subjects which are supposed to constitute an education are conveyed to them; and these, never having taken any real hold of their understandings, are commonly forgotten as soon as they are out of the schoolroom.

Meanwhile their minds, properly so called, have never been cultivated at all. They have no idea of thinking; no notion of ever reflecting, not merely on abstract subjects, but even on the practical truths their everyday experience brings before them: consequently their views of life are as superficial, as incomplete, and, on most points, as false as it is well possible to conceive.

And now observe a marvellous fallacy—a fallacy which the commonest

amount of observation and experience proves to be such—that they are instructed in, directly or indirectly, from their childhood : they are all to marry.

In our England, where the feminine element very considerably predominates in the population, where a large proportion of the men are in professions or in pecuniary circumstances which render marriage imprudent or impossible, where they, having practically the right of choosing, comparatively denied to women, naturally select the most attractive or the best dowered within their reach,—in a country where the matrimonial market is thus constituted, all girls, however plain, however little gifted with charms of any kind, however poor, and however little fitted, either by nature or education, to fill the parts of wives or mothers, are allowed to grow up under the firm impression that husbands will be forthcoming as soon as they are ready for them. And what husbands? Do they mean to content themselves with curates on fifty pounds a year? with doctors whose *clientèle* does not enable them to keep a gig, or even a pony wherewith to go their rounds?—with office-clerks?—with men a step lower than themselves in the social scale? By no means. Though perhaps they might at last, when all chance of winning even these has left them, be ready and willing to content themselves with such matches, their earlier aspirations are of a far loftier cast. They expect to marry men whose means and positions will enable them to live as they always have done, when, like Mrs. Micawber, they were at home with their papa and mamma. Perchance they look even higher, or, if of a sentimental turn, they may be willing to brave—poor feeble, helpless, unknowing souls, *they brave* any moral or practical difficulty—poverty for the sake of a red coat or a blue jacket, a pair of moustaches or a Byronic collar.

And with these notions in their heads they go on, at first proud and confident, then uneasy, later despondent. Perhaps one or two of them do marry, well or ill, as the case may be, and embark on a new life, with new cares, duties, and responsibilities, which they are no more fitted to undertake or perform than they were the old ones. And for the rest? Papa dies one day,—an event which seems to be regarded as a most unnatural and unexpected catastrophe; and the girls—girls perhaps no longer—find themselves thrown on the world poor, unprotected, forlorn, helpless creatures, without power, or heart, or energy to meet half-way such efforts as may be made to help them; or, if they have the will, lacking, through their miserable nurture, the skill to help themselves.

The condition of single women—I mean women who, being past their youth, have given up the prospect of marrying—is, when under adverse circumstances, no doubt a highly trying and difficult one. Yet it depends immensely on themselves how far they may make it insupportable, endurable, or even comparatively contented.

The term of “old maid” is ceasing in some degree to be one of reproach and ridicule; and, if frankly accepted, and proudly and courageously

borne, it need never fear either. A large proportion of old maids have had at some time a chance, some of them many chances, of marrying, and often it is to their credit that they have rejected them. Not marrying where they would, they have scorned to marry where they could—to marry for marrying's sake; or duty has prevented their yielding to the dictates of their hearts; or death, or faithlessness, or estrangement has come between them and those once loving and beloved, and a great gulf of pain, to which they have resigned themselves, of regret, which they have accepted, perhaps, as better than remorse, lies between their quiet present and the stormy troubled joys of their past—of “*ces beaux jours où elles étaient si malheureuses.*”

Others never have had such opportunities. But if they have lost something, they have been spared much; and for that they may well be thankful.

Another fallacy commonly entertained is, that when parents marry a daughter, she is “settled,” provided for, no longer any cause of anxiety.

It would be far too much for the limits of this chapter to attempt to enter on the ills to which wedded flesh and wedded spirit are heirs. Enough to glance at the domestic difficulties, the domestic quarrels, the anxieties attendant on the health, moral and physical, on the lives and prospects of husband and children; on the self-denial, the loss of liberty and independence, the sacrifice of affections and tastes—at times of principles—involved in matrimony. From all, or nearly all, these evils the single woman—the old maid, if you will—is free; and if she misses the near and dear ties, the exclusive protection and tender care which her married sister may (or may not) have found in marriage, she can yet find many objects besides dogs, cats, and parrots—though harmless solace may be won from these—round which to twine the loving tendrils that stretch from her heart, anxious to find something round which to cling tenderly.

But the first thing—and what is now in practice, if not in theory, regarded as about the last—is to educate the mind. Give a girl broad, sane views of religion and morals; teach her to be thoroughly natural, *perfectly truthful*, free from vulgar pretensions, not ashamed of evidences of poverty, of domestic shifts and cares; to give little heed to the remarks of Mrs. Grundy in small matters; to be generally active and helpful, and charitable in thought and word and deed, and, most especially, to keep herself constantly occupied,—not occupied to the exclusion, or even the curtailment, of natural and healthful and suitable enjoyments,—all work and no play has precisely the same effect on Jill that it has on Jack,—but to acquire regular habits of study, undertaken, not as a set task, but as a means to a definite end; and to cultivate the intellect, while developing by all possible means any especial manifestation of it in the form of a particular gift or talent.

Having, I trust, made out my case to the satisfaction of my readers on the subject of the imperfections of our system of education as applied to girls whom Fate—not their parents—has destined to lead single lives,

let us glance briefly at the effects of the same system when the expectations and views of the parents are fulfilled.

It is to be supposed that when a reasonable man marries without mercenary views, he at least expects to find in his wife a companion for himself, a supervisor for his household, and a tender, and more or less skilful, nurse, guide, and early instructor for his children.

To be the first, not only must her talents have been cultivated, but her mind must especially have been fitted to take due part and interest in the things that occupy his. There must be a give-and-take intercourse between them, and he must be able to feel that whatever he has nearest at heart he can freely and easily communicate to her, without effort, undoubtingly, and in the assurance that he has but to speak to be comprehended, sympathised with, and, if need be, aided or strengthened by those happy suggestions that so often rise like inspirations from the heart to the brain of women of fine sensibilities, even when not of particularly bright or strong intellects.

To be the second, if she wishes to spare, in the earlier years of her married life, an infinity of pain, perplexity, time, money, and discomfort to herself and her husband, she must have really studied, in some degree, more or less according to her natural aptitude in the matter, the real, practical details of keeping in due order her house and her servants. Housekeeping does not come by inspiration, as most mothers and daughters nowadays seem to imagine; and the better it is understood, the less trouble, by many degrees, does it give. Like all other things, when once properly organised, a little daily care and supervision are all that are necessary to keep the machine in motion, and prevent the distressing jars, clankings, and shriekings that infallibly attend its progress when out of order.

For I have no faith in your panting housekeeper, who is not fit to be seen in the morning; who spends hours a day in her kitchen and store-room; who is accompanied by a perpetual jingle of keys; who drives her servants, and does half their work herself; and who, while you are talking to her, has her thoughts on the bread in the oven, the meat at the fire, the clothes in the wash-tub, and the twopence-halfpenny change that the grocer's boy did *not* bring from the shilling she paid him yesterday. God forbid that I should preach "that subterranean prudence which presides at marriages, with words that take hold of the upper world, while one eye is prowling in the cellar, so that its gravest discourse has a savour of hams and powdering tubs."

But it is precisely to avoid the late and painful and laborious initiation into these matters after marriage, that a girl should gradually and leisurely and easily acquire a knowledge of them before. I do not want her to cook the dinner, but I want that she should know how it ought to be cooked; nor to clean the house, but to see that the housemaid cleans it, and keeps it so.

As to the third point,—the rearing of children,—it would take an infinitely larger space than I can possibly afford to give it.

But this, perhaps, yet more than either of the former duties of the married woman's life, requires the utmost exercise of such powers as nothing but the cultivation of her highest religious, moral, and mental qualities can insure.

And to achieve the necessary level for all this, we have seen what her training has been!

I take it as an undoubted fact, that to the low standard of feminine cultivation is very largely attributable the feminine defect which has, for any given length of time, formed a theme for sorrowing remark or satirical criticism,—I refer to the want of union and of charity, the petty spites and jealousies between women.

I think it will not be denied that one of the most striking points of distinction between women of a high and of a low stamp lies in the manner in which each regards her fellows; and if the majority of women could only be brought to look upon these as her sisters and friends instead of as her rivals and enemies, an enormous deal of good might accrue. I grieve to say it, but very, very rarely indeed do we find such friendships existing between women as we do between men,—friendships destitute of any petty jealousy, loyal, devoted, unreserved, thoroughly sincere; friendships that "think no evil," will hear no evil spoken of the friend, and that stand the tests of time, change, and absence. Between man and man, and perhaps yet more fully between man and woman, such alliances are far from uncommon, but between two women they are almost unique.

Yet if we would only think of the value union would be to women!

I don't want that we should form meetings, in which to fight among ourselves as to the best plans of forcing man to accord us privileges we don't want, are not fit for, and should get very sick of after we had rendered ourselves supremely ridiculous, and had horribly abused them. Nor I don't want women's clubs, nor women's literary feasts, as in Paris; nor Lola-Montez lectures, nor female doctors, as in America. Heaven forbid that I should see the Rifle movement spread among the feminine portion of the population to any more practical extent than the bestowing of bugles and embroidering of colours—both very praiseworthy and graceful methods of showing interest and taking part therein.

Depend upon it, the Amazons had many *mauvais quarts d'heures* among themselves in Themiscyra; and think how the bare apparition of Achilles routed a whole army of them!

Let women unite as a sisterhood, not band themselves together Nematic fashion, and see what they might achieve.

In certain circumstances, none but women can help women. Not only can they alone, humanly speaking, raise the fallen, but, in innumerable instances, they might prevent the fall.

"A word spoken in due season," by a woman to a woman, "how sweet is it!"

Many a thoughtless girl, who begins by innocently exerting her

powers of pleasing, is urged on, by the jealousy of those who conceive themselves aggrieved by her superior success, to degenerate into an arrant flirt; and finally, finding herself separated from her sex, partly through her own fault, partly through theirs, turns to the other for support and society, and proceeds to lengths she would once have shuddered to contemplate.

I grieve to admit it, but I have known women who made it a point to direct their batteries of "nods and becks, and wreathed smiles," on men whose affections they knew to be preëngaged, and who have gloried in winning from them such homage as was due elsewhere.

I think that many male moralists and painters of manners make a mistake in generalising the virtuous indignation and contempt of virtuous women against the frailer of the sex. Whatever the motive, be it a consciousness of superiority or a charitable sense that the difference between them lies rather in the difference of circumstances, and absence or presence of temptation; be it a mixture of these feelings, I am sure many women can feel more kindly towards a weak and erring sister than towards a too prosperous one.

But what then? that sympathising pity and aid that you are willing to extend to the lost,—might it not, if exerted in due time, have saved her?

And even in the ordinary circumstances of every-day life, if we would work together with sincerity, unselfishness, and single-heartedness, lifting the burden off each other's shoulders, sparing each other by thought, word, and deed, *putting ourselves in each other's positions*,—for so alone can we truly understand how to feel for, comfort, and aid each other,—being "kindly affectionate one to another," putting aside the temptations to jealousy that "so easily beset us,"—we should acquire a strength and a security hitherto unknown.

The influence of women over each other for good or evil is incalculable. I believe that a vicious woman is infinitely more powerful to corrupt woman than the most dissolute man; and I am persuaded that if every woman could have the true friendship of one of the nobler specimens of her sex, it would be the strongest earthly safeguard she could possess.

Thus far the matter lies in our own hands, and the evils I have described it is, in a great degree, within our own power to redress; many of them, indeed, none but ourselves can rectify.

For Better, for Worse.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE seemed no fear of Grace, in her brief authority at the Rectory at Leigh Moss, finding time hang heavily on her hands during her brother's short absence. She had full employment in putting in order and arranging every thing in and about it for the reception of its new mistress, —choosing the sunniest and brightest little room for Katie's own; decking the low-roofed French-windowed sitting-room which opened on the bit of lawn and shrubbery, and was dignified by the title of drawing-room, with all the little ornaments she could find scattered about the house; arranging a rustic stand of flowers in one window, and placing a bright nosegay in a glass vase in another; ransacking the Rector's bookshelves for the best-bound books she could find to fill up the shelves of the little chiffonnier; and altogether making such a general hubbub and confusion as would have somewhat disconcerted the said matter-of-fact and very orderly Mr. Clifford, could he have witnessed the operation before the grand effect had been obtained.

Then there were the sick to visit, and some of them lived far away on the fells among the purple heather and the blue sky, which seemed to meet in the horizon stretching away on the distant hills. But mounted on Ralph's little shaggy pony, with her basket of provisions and good things slung on the pommel of her saddle, Grace was not afraid to start away alone on her mission of love in Ralph's service. And the people liked to see her bright face at their doors, and she grew used to their north-country dialect and their rough unpolished ways, so unlike the gentler bearing of the more southern counties. It was drawing towards the close of the day but one on which Ralph was expected home, that Grace watched the sun getting low in the horizon, and, remembering there was a short cut through the park, she decided in her mind to try and find it, though she knew well, had Ralph been with her, he would have walked miles round rather than have trespassed on Redenham property. Through the tangled masses of underwood, with the tall trees above her, the daylight wore a mirky and dark appearance; but Frisky knew his road, and trotted briskly on, until the pathway suddenly opened, and a broad and dazzling flood of light discovered the sun sinking low in the horizon, sending the long shadows of the trees across the mere, whose placid waters looked like a sheet of molten glass, stretching its light and shade over the undulating sweeps of the large open well-kept park. On a piece of table-land to the right, with the purple hills beyond, rose the proud gray towers of Redenham, with its lofty walls, its broad terraces, its stately porticoes, and its files of windows; bespeaking the vast size and magnificence of the building, which had been

added to, as generation after generation of owners had lavished his abundance in additions to his home, with little or no reference to any thing like architectural uniformity. Time, however, had softened and blended it into a very harmonious and imposing whole. And few of the ancient families of the English nobility could boast of so regal or imposing a home as the Leighs of Redenham. "Well enough they may be proud of it!" Grace inwardly exclaimed, as she sat still on her pony for a moment, while her eye rapidly scanned the view before her. Workmen were scattered about over the building, and heaps of rubbish, ladders, baskets, and barrows were lying about over the broad stone terraces and the long flights of steps leading down to the gardens below. Two roads branched off from where Grace stood. One led evidently across the path to the village, the other turned off in a little bridle-track to the Castle. Though it would prolong her distance, Grace's natural curiosity led her to take a nearer view of the home which was so soon to claim Ethie for its mistress. As she approached the house, she found, however, that it was but a private way, and led directly to the stables. It was too late to return, so, putting the best face she could on it, she made her way up to a respectable-looking woman who was loitering about and talking to some of the workmen, and asked her if she would kindly put her into the way to reach the village, as she had taken the wrong path, and did not like to return.

The woman looked at her for a moment, and then, apparently recognising the curate's pony, she called to a boy, and bade him lead the pony round through the stable-yard to the other side of the house, and turning civilly to Grace, begged she would follow her through one of the open windows on the terrace to the entrance on the other side. Grace gladly enough did as her conductor desired, and soon found herself in a magnificent suite of rooms, opening one into another, with painted and gilded ceilings, and rich draperies, and large mirrors, and polished oak floors, and carved furniture, which only here and there peeped out from the thick holland covers which closely surrounded them.

"This seems to be an immense house," Grace said, as she walked on through one room after another by the side of her conductress.

"Yes, miss, 'tis, sure enough; and lots of rooms on the other side are hardly ever used," the old woman replied.

"There are a great many workmen about apparently; do you know when Sir Philip and Lady Leigh are expected back from abroad?"

"We haven't heard yet for certain, miss, but orders came last week from the steward to have more hands put on; so methinks it won't be very long just now; and a great change it will make, one way and another, when the family are here again, after shutting it all up so close for so many years."

"Have you lived here alone; for I suppose you are the housekeeper?" Grace said.

"No, miss, I ain't the housekeeper; I was one of the housemaids at

the time Sir Walter died, and when the late Lady Leigh and Miss Ann went away, I stayed on with Mrs. Edwards to help her take care of it all. After a bit I married one of the gardeners; and as there was a smart lot of work to do to keep the place well aired and dusted, and Mrs. Edwards didn't like fresh faces, and I had no children, I still stayed on. At last, when more than ten years went by, and we had a'most given up all hope of ever seeing any body coming to live here again, Mrs. Edwards got a letter from Mrs. Leigh—that's Sir Philip's mother, you know,—saying that Sir Philip was going to be married; and as his lady was very young, not much better than a little child, Mrs. Leigh thought, she said, 'twould be better to send down a more experienced housekeeper, as Sir Philip would wish to have every thing in first-rate style, and Mrs. Edwards was to leave. Poor soul, she took on about it awful at first. She had lived in the house ever since she was a child, and had served the family so many years, and nursed Master Arthur and poor dear Miss Ann in their cradles, and was with Sir Walter when he died. She fretted dreadfully at the thought of being turned out now in her old age. But Mrs. Leigh, you see, miss, is a very high lady, and she have got very haughty notions about doing things in the right way, and she thinks there never was any body like her son. And Sir Philip gives in to her entirely, they tell me; which to my mind is a great pity."

"And Mrs. Edwards has left you now, then?" Grace said, getting interested in this little peep behind the scenes of her sister's new home.

"Yes, miss. Mrs. Edwards had an aged mother Miss Ann had been very kind to, and had put into a cottage near her house in the Isle of Wight, and Mrs. Edwards went there to nurse and take care of her. Miss Ann, you know, would take care she never wanted for a home."

"And who is the Miss Ann you speak of? Is she Sir Philip's sister?"

"La bless you, no, miss! she's the sister, the twin sister, of poor Master Arthur as was killed,—as beautiful a young lady she used to be, when I last saw her, as ever you clapped eyes on, and as kind-hearted as she was good. Every body loved her. 'Twas she as was to have been married to the present baronet if it hadn't been for that terrible accident. 'Twas all planned in their cradles, they tell me; how Master Philip—that was Sir Walter's nephew, and belonged to Leigh Court, the white house the other side of the mere—and our Miss Ann was to be married, and Master Philip almost lived with his uncle. His father was dead, and Sir Walter brought him up with his own son. Well, then came that terrible accident that you have heard tell of, no doubt, when Master Arthur was suddenly killed, and poor Miss Ann was injured some way in her back, and for long they thought she would have died too, but she didn't, though I have heard she has been a cripple ever since. Sir Walter, poor gentleman, didn't live long, and then they all went away—Lady Leigh and Miss Ann; and from that day to this nobody has ever come back to live at Redenham."

"And Sir Philip did not marry his cousin after all?" Grace said in a low tremulous tone, as if consciously prying into family secrets when she had no right to do so.

"No, poor thing! They said—I won't answer for the truth of it—that she broke off the match. Mrs. Edwards heard that she should say, it wasn't right the heir of Redenham should be tied all his life to a poor cripple like herself. They said, too, 'twas long before Sir Philip would give up all hope; and when he did, he never liked to put any body else in the place that seemed of right to belong to his poor cousin. Some said his mother (Mrs. Leigh and her daughters are awful high people) could never find any body good enough to match with her son! However that may have been, it seems he did meet with somebody to suit him at last; and right glad every soul in Redenham will be to see the old castle alive again, with company coming and going as it used to be. No place was ever thought so much of for miles round as Redenham Castle."

"And Sir Philip's mother and sisters," Grace asked, nervously, "do they ever come here? Have they much to do with Redenham?"

"They will come here now, no doubt," the woman replied; "but they never have been yet. They go occasionally to Leigh Court, when Sir Philip has run down for a few weeks' shooting, and of course they would come once here, and rout about the house finely; but they ain't like the last Lady Leigh or Miss Ann; they, young ladies, give themselves airs and interfere. They don't mean wrong, they tell me, and perhaps 'tis true; but people don't like it, and don't take to them. Poor Miss Ann! I would give a deal to see her once more, poor thing! Mrs. Edwards writes word she is more like an angel than any thing in this world; but she says she is strangely altered in face from what she was when I last saw her. If you will step into this room, ma'am, I will uncover her picture."

It was a large oil-painting of two children, a boy and a girl, leaning over the stone balustrade of the terrace and gazing straight into your face. Their arms were thrown lovingly round each other's neck, and a tall Scotch greyhound was pushing his long nose close up to the little girl's cheek. The boy's eyes were large, soft, hazel eyes; the girl's darker, and brighter, and more glittering. There were dimples on their rosy cheeks, and smiles about their mouths, and their dark glossy hair hung in ringlets upon their necks and shoulders. It was altogether a bright and pretty picture, and Grace felt she would have liked to have known more of the sorrowful story which had sent one to an untimely grave, and robbed the other of all that the heart holds dearest.

"If you would come here some morning, when the workmen are gone, miss, and the dust is cleared away, I would take you over the house, and uncover the rest of the pictures; there are a great lot of 'em about the walls, and some are counted very good by them as understand such things, they tell me; but just now we are in an awful mess and muddle.

I am sure I shall be uncommon glad when the baronet and his lady come back from abroad, and the place looks a little more as it used to do. A lot of new furniture came in last week from London, for her Ladyship's own rooms. Sir Philip is spending no end of money in making it all comfortable, though, for that matter, there seemed enough of every thing in the house before, I should have thought, for any reasonable creature."

As they passed through the conservatory, still bright and glowing with autumnal beauty, Grace ventured to beg a nosegay to decorate her own little drawing-room the next day; and then, with many thanks to her kind conductress, she mounted Frisky at the grand entrance in the courtyard, and, following the pathway pointed out by the boy across the park, cantered briskly home to Leigh Moss.

There was no lack of food for Grace's thoughts as she bustled about her own home, dusting and arranging, and making the most of every bit of ornamental furniture she could put her hands on; but a cloud of doubt and uncertainty still laid heavily on her on Ethel's account, and she turned away, as resolutely as she could, from puzzling herself with possibilities, to the certain pleasure Katie's expected arrival was sure to bring her. Katie herself could not have desired a warmer welcome than Grace gave her, when she and Ralph drove up to their own door in a hired fly, and Grace's smiling happy face and sisterly embrace greeted her as Ralph led her into her new home.

With her sister-in-law's arrival at Leigh Moss a new life opened to Grace Atherton. Together the two girls worked and drew, or helped Ralph in his schools and parish-visits. Together they decorated the church for the Christmas festival; together they assisted the blind organist in the better formation of a village choir; together they roamed about in the fields to gather early violets, watched the young trout in the mere, or loitered under the hedgerows to await Ralph on his return from the extremities of his distant parish. Grace heard from Ralph all that Margaret was doing, and, willing to follow her footsteps in ever so humble a way, she volunteered her assistance to the one uncouth and very slovenly domestic of the Rectory. The stout rough Yorkshire damsel who acted in the capacity of maid-of-all-work could hardly comprehend the revolution which Katie and Grace effected after a time in the culinary department of their modest establishment,—Grace, in her brown-holland apron and sleeves and white floury arms, vigorously kneading the dough for the fresh batch of household bread, and Katie, with her cookery-book before her, plunging desperately into the mysteries of some untried delicacy which was to surprise Ralph on his return home after his tiring walk.

"All this seems so easy to do, I can't think why I never thought of it before," Grace said, as she and Kate stood by their yule-fire, having just returned from making their simple toilets, preparatory to their substantial tea, which took the place of a late dinner. "I knew how badly Charlotte cooked, and how cold and comfortless every thing was served

up, but it never entered my head that I could alter it. I knew, too, that Margaret was doing a hundred wise things at Deighton, and I sighed and moaned inwardly, because nothing seemed to happen in which I could be of use to Ralph. It is a weary feeling to know you are a burden on those you love. Oh, how I longed to be an artist—an author—even a governess—any thing, in fact, which would give me the power of earning my own bread! And yet, when I talked to Ralph, he only smiled and bid me not despair; and when I thought about it, I could not tell how I should begin; so nothing came of it but sighs and moans. I really do begin now to hope that single women are not such very useless beings after all."

"We are apt to think we are useless, because we cannot go forth into the world in active combat with its difficulties. Perhaps if we looked about our own quiet homes for those small insignificant employments we are prone to despise, as leading to no definite results, we should ultimately find that higher and seemingly nobler duties opened out before us," Katie replied. "Generally speaking, girls are not taught to employ spare moments diligently; we fritter away time in gossip and idleness, and also in the very longing for something to do, instead of resolutely fitting ourselves for doing that something, whatever it may be, when the right time comes."

"Well, I for one ought not to be wasting time over trifles," Grace exclaimed; "I who am doing nothing for Frank, my own brother, not yet even helping to take charge of mamma, while Margaret and Ralph, with but half the tie to them that I have, are slaving away for us all! Kate, do you know I only wait now till Ethelind returns from abroad. I have a strange, restless, craving to see her; and then, when that longing is gratified, I mean resolutely to become a governess,—that is, of course, if any body can be found weak enough to trust their children in such heedless hands."

Kate smiled: "Things certainly appear brighter than they did, Grace, and it is entirely due to your energy; you only wanted starting. I do not see how Ralph could spare you from your class in school, or from the choir in church, especially as I can give him no assistance, except in keeping the children quiet and orderly in their seats. Charlotte has already improved so much under your care, that we shall soon be able to get her a better place, and take a young girl from the school as her substitute; besides, if you leave, what is to become of me without you? How I should weary of Ralph's long absences! Make all the use you can of your time, Grace: it is erring on the safe side to be prepared for every emergency; but you must not think of leaving us for the present."

It was drawing on towards the middle of March, when Ralph came in one evening from his study to his wife and sister, who were working busily by the fire.

"Grace," said he, "Simpson has just been here. He came to tell me

Sir Philip and Ethelind are expected at the Castle to-morrow evening. There is to be a gathering of the tenantry on the lawn to greet their arrival with a band and banners, and bell-ringing all day."

The blood forsook Grace's cheeks, and then went rushing wildly back over neck and face. "What! Ethie actually in England! How strange it is she should never have sent us one little line to say so," she exclaimed. "But she will explain it all now I am sure! Oh, I am so delighted! Dear, dear Ethie!" and Grace bounded out of her chair and looked radiant with expectant joy.

Ralph did not say much; he stood with his elbow on the mantel-shelf, looking thoughtfully into the fire.

"Did Simpson give you any particulars?" Grace asked nervously, as she saw the cloud on her brother's brow. "Does he wish you to join the people on the lawn, Ralph?"

"He suggested it, of course, and in ordinary cases it is most certainly what I should have wished to do; but now comes the difficulty of my present position. I do not choose to force myself on Sir Philip; I must leave it to him to make the first advances. I could not tell Simpson why I shall not be with them. It is altogether, I fear, a very awkward dilemma in which I find myself."

"I am afraid it is," Grace replied thoughtfully, "unless Ethelind has worked a great change in her husband; and even then, after all I heard from that servant at Redenham of his mother and sisters, I own I have very little hope."

"But can you excuse yourself, Ralph?" Kate suggested. "Will it not look strange in the eyes of your parishioners not to be with them at such a time?"

"It will, but it cannot be avoided; Sir Philip must take the initiative, come what will. I told Simpson I could not possibly join them, though I should have liked to have done so, had it been possible. Not knowing me, Sir Philip, I said, would not notice my absence. I think it puzzled him; he looked as though he could not comprehend it all, and, as I could not explain farther, I could only turn off the subject. Their pew is to be got ready for them, to come here to church on Sunday if they please. New velvet cushions, &c., are to be sent to-morrow."

"And I shall have to meet Ethel for the first time in church! Oh, Ralph, how can I possibly avoid rushing into her arms?"

"Grace," Ralph said, and there was a careful look on his usually cheerful face, and a subdued determined tone in his voice, which struck his wife and sister instantly, "Grace, my fear is, we shall all have to learn the difficult lesson of restraining our first natural impulses. For my sake, for Ethel's,—and hers is even dearer to us than our own,—resolutely guard your feelings from display. I can give you no cue as to what should or should not be done. I may be over-cautious—over-careful; but this I earnestly require of you: unless you are prepared stoically to endure whatever may be in store for us, do not venture to

appear in church on Sunday until you are sure they will not honour us with their presence from Redenham."

"And you, Ralph," Katie said, "can you venture, do you think, to go through the service? Are you sure you will not break down?"

Ralph threw himself down on the sofa by Katie's side. "Anxious little wife!" he replied. "Anxious for her husband's nerves; more anxious for his reputation! We men have such things, I suppose; nerves of brass, perhaps; certainly of a less excitable nature than yours. Yes, I can manage it, I hope; at all events, I must try. My fear is, for Ethelind first—then, darling, for you; for if matters prove as unpropitious as I sometimes dread, my Katie may find herself homeless!" Katie kissed the broad open brow which rested on her shoulder.

"God will not forget us, dearest," she replied, "if we do what is right. Do not let us be disheartened. It is no fault of yours that we are here. If it really will prove for Ethelind's good that we quit our home, we will go at once, when you can get the curacy satisfactorily placed in other hands."

"Sooner said than done, little woman!" Ralph replied. "But where is Grace off to?" he added; "into her own room for a quiet flood of tears, now, I'll be bound. Poor girl, it will be a sharp trial for her, and Ethie too, to be so near each other, if they must not meet; but in that case, for both their sakes, I shall pack Grace off to Deighton: any place will be preferable to her remaining here." And Ralph went back to his study to put the finishing touches to his sermon.

Grace listened restlessly to the bells, as from early dawn they continuously pealed out their joyous welcome. She remembered how desolate she had felt when the noble peal from St. Mary's tapering spire had heralded forth their wedding, nearly twelve months ago. She watched the people from the hills and vales flock past the Rectory-door in their holiday dresses. She caught the roll of the distant drums, mustering in the village beyond. The sun shone gaily; the birds sung in the trees. Every thing seemed rejoicing and gay, except the restless spirits at the Rectory. It was vain to attempt hiding their anxiety from each other. It was useless attempting to sit still; and though Ralph laughed at Grace, and several times very philosophically returned to his study writing-table, Grace caught the sound of his footfall across the floor, or his low whistled snatches of old tunes, which told plainly enough that the mind of its occupant was not entirely absorbed, either in the study of divinity, or the final touches of his pen to his next Sunday's sermon.

CHAPTER XIV.

Nor until the porter had shut and locked the door of the carriage of the train which Ethelind and Philip had just placed themselves in at the Euston Square station—not until the panting and puffing engine had carried them far beyond the dull, dirty-looking houses and streets of the

suburbs of London, into the pleasant sunshiny country fields and budding hedgerows—did Ethelind freely draw breath, and feel herself once more at ease. The yoke of her mother and sisters-in-law's pride had pressed heavily on the fresh young spirit of the poor girl. If this, her first peep into the ranks of the "upper ten thousand," better she felt, far better, would it be never to quit the shadow of some quiet home, with her own Philip at her side, as he had been during their stay abroad; better almost to be exiled from her native land for ever, than have to submit to the stern shackles of society, which offered so few attractions in return for its own hard exactions. And Philip, too, breathed freer away from Barbara's sarcasms and Diana's stiff unsisterly formalism towards his young wife. They had each galled him in his most sensitive feelings, though he did not choose to show it; and he turned again to Ethie's bright smiles and merry rejoinders, with a double relish, as they whirled rapidly along in the express train towards their new home. "It won't be long now before we reach the Leigh Station," Philip said, as he put down his paper and looked at his watch. "I don't know what sort of welcome is intended for us, but Simpson sent me word he thought there would be some sort of demonstration in honour of our arrival."

"Will there?" Ethelind said, in a startled tone. "Nothing, I hope, in which I must take part. You will tell me what I am to do, Philip? Do you know, I am growing very nervous about my duties and responsibilities. I don't really think, if I had ever guessed what they were, I should have mustered courage to have become your wife! I forgot all my fears, this morning, when I shook myself clear of London; now Redenham, and its cares and its duties, are staring me in the face. It seems as if life was made up of cares, and every step you take brings you deeper into them."

"Well, so I suppose it is; but you will do very well by and by. If you had any doubts, why not have brought Barbara or Di with you? They would have relieved you of all responsibility, and introduced you to the neighbourhood. I should have proposed it, only I thought you did not take to them very readily."

"They were very kind to me," Ethel replied, "but I certainly prefer being here first without them." She did not wish Philip should think her prejudiced against his sisters; but had she not been rejoicing the whole day through at having left them miles behind her?

As they neared the station, Ethelind's quick eye caught sight of a travelling carriage and four splendid gray horses, with postillions in dark red livery and black velvet caps. A dignified and very sedate-looking butler was on the railway platform, with two or three other servants in livery beside him. "Welcome to Redenham, Sir Philip, and my lady, too," he said, making a profound bow to Ethelind, as Sir Philip helped her alight from the carriage.

"Thank you, Stephens," Sir Philip replied, heartily; "we shall be

very glad to be amongst you all again. Is there any body else here? Where is Simpson?"

"He is just outside, Sir Philip. With your leave, the yeomanry cavalry and the tenants are all out at the cross-roads to meet you; shall I lead the way to the carriage, my lady? James and Robert will look after the luggage; I suppose Mr. Godfrey knows where it is." And Philip, with Ethel on his arm, walked out to the other side of the station, followed by Valerie, bearing endless cloaks and shawls. A crowd of people gathered round the carriage-door, to see the young wife Sir Philip had brought home; but Ethelind thought only of their pleasure in again welcoming the possessor of Redenham to his home. It was some little time before they could start. Valerie had to be stowed away safely in the rumble, by the side of Godfrey, while Stephens and James mounted the coach-box. Robert was left to follow with the luggage in the Redenham break.

It was fully two miles to the first lodge, and here a large cavalcade awaited them,—mounted horsemen in cavalry uniform, with banners flying, bands playing; and hundreds of people of all ages and sexes striving eagerly to keep pace with the carriage, by taking short cuts across the park, and round by the glassy mere. Philip bowed, and Ethelind bowed, and laughed, and smiled, as she watched them all, as much amused as if she had merely been a spectator amongst them. As they wound up the broad drive and came out on the summit of the gentle eminence, with the noble front of Redenham full before them, all Ethelind's fears came over her again in their fullest force. "Oh, Philip!" she exclaimed in a low suppressed voice, "what a magnificent home you have brought me to! I never dreamt it was half so noble a place as this." Her husband caught the expression of her face,—there was surprise more than pleasure in it, without doubt.

"Do you not like it, Ethie? Is it not what you expected?" he asked anxiously.

"It is too grand, too magnificent," she murmured. "I had not thought of it as half so large. But it is very beautiful!" And she drew a long breath to recover herself; and before Philip could attempt to reassure her, the horses had struck into a quick sharp trot, up the steepest part of the road, and then drew up with a proper demonstration in the courtyard.

Philip sprung lightly out, and then assisting Ethel to alight, and leading her up the flight of steps to the entrance, drew her arm within his; and turning round and taking off his hat, he stood for some minutes facing the throng of people who had gathered close up round them. Three hearty cheers rung out for "Sir Philip and Lady Leigh." Ethel's arm trembled as it rested on her husband's; but except for the shade of heightened colour on his cheek, and the glitter in his eye, you would not have known how moved the strong man really felt at the scene before him.

"My friends," he said, and his voice rung out sharp and clear, so that every one could distinctly hear him, "I sincerely thank you for the warm and hearty welcome you have given us to-day—a welcome as unexpected as it is gratifying to my feelings to witness. As yet, I owe it entirely to your own kind hearts, and the love you bore those who preceded me. The time will come, I trust, when we may have some better claim upon you for our own sakes as well as theirs. It will be Lady Leigh's endeavour, as I am sure it will be mine, to deserve the honour you have done us to-day, and to endeavour to bind closer, by sympathy and mutual help, the bond which should ever unite the interest of proprietor and tenant. Again, in Lady Leigh's name, I must thank you specially for your welcome, and we hope you will go round to the north entrance, where a barrel of Redenham home-brewed and a cold dinner is already prepared, Simpson tells me, for those who would like to partake of it after their exertions."

Again cheers, long and loud, rung out for Sir Philip and his lady; and then, still clinging to his arm, Ethelind followed her husband into the hall. A long file of servants were drawn up to receive their new mistress, headed by a large red-faced imposing personage, dressed out in a bright-green silk dress, with black lace cap and flaunty yellow ribbons. Stephens and Godfrey were there also; but most of the men had disappeared to the other side of the house, where their services were required to serve out the hospitalities of Redenham to the crowd.

"The dinner, my lady, is ordered for half-past seven o'clock," the yellow ribbons murmured, in a soft oily voice; "will it please your ladyship to say if that hour is agreeable?"

Ethel glanced towards her husband appealingly. "Yes, that will do; but serve it in the library to-night, remember: Lady Leigh is tired with her journey, and the room is warmer and smaller than the others." And Sir Philip looked sharply at the smooth red face, and its endless bends and becks, though he made no remarks. "Come, Ethel," he said, "there is an hour to dinner yet: let us go and explore some of the rooms of this great place which seems to have frightened you so much. I will take you to your own room first—I want to see what that fellow Snell has made of it all, for I have trusted entirely to his judgment and taste in their arrangement. They ascended the broad oak staircase, which opened on a long corridor running round three sides of the house, lighted by large oriel windows, with magnificent views over the park and of the country round. It was carpeted with dark red cloth, throwing out boldly the noble groups of statuary standing between the windows and the paintings, which hung on the walls between the doors. Tables and chairs and ottomans were standing about in the deep recesses of the windows, inviting you to lounge about in the bright sunshine, enjoying the extensive views, or to take exercise in that warm promenade on a wet day. Ethelind's suite of rooms,—bedroom, dressing-room, boudoir, morning-room, &c., all opened into each other, with a pretty conservatory, with a

flight of marble steps leading down into a larger one on the terrace, which connected her room with the drawing-rooms below; so that from within or without she had free access to her own private apartments.

Nothing had been spared to make it the perfection of luxurious comfort and elegance. The only doubt which at all troubled her was a feeling that it was too luxurious, too artificial for her ever to feel at home in it. She almost longed to see some old easy chair, or well-worn sofa, on which she could have thrown herself while she took a survey of her possessions, and learnt to adapt herself to her new life. Alas, poor Ethie! She was but a child still, and had yet to learn how very soon the soft luxuries of life steal upon you one by one, and so become insensibly the very necessities of the rich. Valerie was already taking possession of wardrobes and toilet-tables; and as she shook out the soft folds of her mistress's pink *barège* dress, and brushed out and braided her bright glossy hair, she could not resist pouring out in eloquent strains her admiration of the splendid château which owned Sir Philip as master. Valerie's English mother had taught the girl enough of her own language to make her child sufficiently familiar with it as to add very considerably to her comfort now that she was thrown entirely amongst English servants in a strange place and a large house. Valerie could already have told of the admiration excited by her mistress in the servants' hall; of the wonder created by her extreme youthfulness and beauty. "Such a sweet face!—and for all the world like a young child rather than a woman!" "More by half like Sir Philip's daughter than his wife," seemed the general opinion; while the sleek, meek, red-faced yellow-ribbons exclaimed inwardly, "Goodness me! well enough Mrs. Leigh should say our new lady was no better than a child! See if I don't get the upper hand of every thing in this place in a twinkling! Sir Philip's got a sharpish look with him—the Leigh eye, I s'pose 'tis—that they tells me sees every thing; 'twill be sharper than I takes it for if it sees through me,—that's all. It takes something to beat me when I sets my heart on any thing. At all events, 'tis worth a trial."

With her cashmere wrapped carefully round her shoulders, Ethel wandered with Philip over the house; looked at some of the old paintings; admired the widespread views from the windows; crossed the magnificent hall with its lantern dome of coloured glass; the steel armour which glanced bright on the walls reflecting back the flames from the burning logs in the quaint fireplaces on each side the staircase; its leopard-skin rugs, and the silken banners still floating round the tall clustering pillars of polished marble which supported the groined roof; and then finished off by passing the evening together in the wainscoted library, just as they did abroad, in the full enjoyment of each other's society, uninterrupted by any thing which could throw a shadow over Ethelind's intense happiness.

Ethel often recurred in thought to that first evening spent at Redenham, which, like a sun-picture, remained so indelibly traced on her

memory, that neither happiness nor sorrow in after-years could ever succeed in effacing it. But the realities of life were beginning. Youth and its bright visions were passing away, and Ethel Leigh learnt on the morrow that she must gird up her loins for the battle, for that womanhood had assuredly come, with its trials and struggles,—as come it must to us all,—and her time to take a part in the combat had now arrived.

CHAPTER XV.

ETHELIND sat for more than an hour over her twice-replenished tea-pot, patiently waiting for Philip to join her at the breakfast-table. When he came in at last, he brought heaps of letters and papers, which he sat reading and poring over as he sipped his tea. The steward from Leigh had been with him. News had come down by the night-train of the Ministry having been defeated on some important question, and their expected resignation the following day. Mr. Jones, a shrewd, active lawyer and a great politician, hoped Sir Philip would bestir himself in politics again, as he used to do; so he had posted over to Redenham by daybreak, to consult as to the course he should take if any stir in the country ensued.

"And you, Ethel, must fill the house," he said; "on Monday you will have callers from all the neighbourhood. I will give you a list, by and by, of those I wish you to be most civil to. We will fill the house, if we can, at once."

"Fill the house, Philip? What can you mean?" Ethel replied with a bewildered look, as visions of all those numberless rooms flashed across her.

"Why, get some of the people in the neighbourhood to come and see us—give a sort of house-warming—make Redenham what it used to be years ago."

"But not directly, Philip; I know nobody yet. What should I do with strangers here?" And she looked up with a distressed face to her husband.

"If that is all you fear, we will soon remedy that evil. I will send for Diana or Barbara; they know every one, and will soon introduce you, and take the burden of entertaining your guests off your hands. I should have proposed bringing one of them, only I did not fancy you quite contrived to hit it with the girls. You always seem afraid of Barbara's nonsense; and Di, I know, seems cold to those who don't know her. Still, for all that, I will write to-day, and tell them both to come to us on Monday."

"Oh, if you please, Philip, do no such thing," Ethelind replied. "I dare say I can manage; at all events, I will try, if you will only tell me when I do wrong."

Philip laughed: "Well," he said, "you must remember and keep that

horrid woman my mother has sent down as housekeeper in her right place; I don't like the look of her. No such finery as hers ever used to see daylight in Redenham in old times; and her smooth oily tones don't please me, any more than the horrid dinner she favoured us with last night. Perhaps one has been spoiled lately by French cookery; but pray, do see, Ethel, that out of the loads of dishes she favours us with there is something eatable to-night. After luncheon, I have ordered Robert to bring round your pony-carriage; I will give you your first lesson in driving."

Presently the housekeeper herself appeared, and Ethelind, entirely ignorant as she was of housekeepers and housekeeping, was soon fairly beaten by the plausible speeches and the smooth tongue of the wily woman. "Oh, I know so exactly what you would like, my lady!—I who had, you know, all the responsibility on my own shoulders of the Marquis of Liddington's family; and such a splendid place as it was, and always so full of company! And as to the Marchioness,—I don't know whether you are acquainted with her, my lady,—such a kind, affable lady, and so pleasant in her ways to every body. 'Now, Blake,' says she, 'we shall want the best dinner you can send up for thirty;' or it might be a hunt-breakfast, you know, or a ball-supper, or any thing of that sort; and the house, maybe, crammed full of people from top to toe. 'Well, Blake,' says she, 'I shall leave it all quite contented like in your hands, because I am sure you will manage it all better than I can, and make it go off a great deal better than if I interfered.' So you see, my lady, I shall be quite at home, and I hope you will be also."

Poor Ethelind felt at that moment any thing but at home in her new duties, but she would make an effort for Philip's sake. "The dinner yesterday was not quite what Sir Philip liked," she ventured to say, with a rising colour which she tried hard to keep back; "could you send us up one or two nice little French dishes?"—and she ran over the names of those she remembered to have heard him particularly recommend,—“and let every thing be very hot, if you please, and not quite so many dishes on the table. We are alone to-night, and Sir Philip is extremely particular."

"So Mrs. Leigh pleased to inform me, my lady; indeed, it was on that account she was pleased to select me. The high recommendations, you see, my lady, that I brought from the Marchioness. 'Such a treasure as you are, Mrs. Blake,' as she was good enough to say over and over again, 'how shall I ever get on without you?' Poor Mrs. Leigh, the tears were in her eyes as she hired me: 'So beautiful and young as my daughter-in-law is,' she said, 'how can she know any thing of housekeeping, Mrs. Blake? So on you I shall entirely depend.' 'And you may rest assured, Mrs. Leigh,' says I, 'that I will do my very utmost to serve her ladyship and Sir Philip.'" The oily-tongued, red-faced Mrs. Blake forgot to add how rejoiced the Marchioness of Liddington had felt in having, by her absence from home, when Mrs. Leigh had called for a personal character of her late housekeeper, escaped the necessity of telling the

truth respecting her short three months' reign in the Liddington household ; glossing over faults in a short note, to save the consequences of telling the truth, under the charitable excuse to her own conscience of preventing the poor woman from earning a livelihood, and thus not only entailing trouble and disappointment on others, but perpetuating an evil which is daily gaining ground amongst us, threatening to uproot the reciprocal bonds of masters and servants, and to break down the whole state of domestic peace and economy throughout the country.

Wrapped in her warm fur jacket, with her veil tied closely over her bonnet, Ethelind took the reins while Philip sat beside her, teaching her how to guide her high-spirited but well-broken ponies, as they wound their way across the park, by the glassy mere, amongst the browsing deer, and then up the purple hill, covered with heather and yellow gorse, and round through the little straggling village of Leigh-Delamere.

"What a pretty picturesque church ! And that cottage to the right, I suppose, is the Rectory. How picturesquely the thatch slopes down over the windows, making quite a little verandah, with the woodbine and honeysuckle over it ! And only look how bright those flower-beds are, with crocuses and jonquils !" Ethel exclaimed.

"That is where poor Clifford lives. My mother, I remember now, said something about his being away ill. I must inquire, by the by, whom he has got for a curate ; the place looks inhabited, for I saw one lady, if not two, looking out at us as we passed," Sir Philip said.

Ethelind had been too busily engaged in looking at the curious gray church-tower, and the bright flowers in the curate's garden, to notice any one within ; and in another minute they had swept through the village, and up the turn in the road, and into the lodge-gates. And Ethelind, excited by the fresh breeze on the hills, and the pleasure of driving her own pretty pair of ponies, came down from her toilet, looking fresh and bright as a young May-queen.

"The tea has waited for you so long, it is quite cold ; do wait until I have rung for a fresh cup," Ethelind said, as Philip made his appearance after dinner. She did not look up, or she would have noticed that something not very agreeable had clouded her husband's brow, since she had left him sitting over his dessert.

As the door closed on Stephens, who had brought in the replenished tea-pot, Philip turned round suddenly to Ethel, and asked abruptly if she knew where her brother was living.

Ethelind started. "At Cambridge," she said, "when I left ; but how can I tell now ? I have not heard from home for months. Why, Philip, what makes you ask ?"

"Your brother is in orders, I think, you told me ?"

"Yes, before he left Cambridge,—before dear papa's death. But tell me, Philip, have you heard any bad news ?—any thing that—that I ought to know ?" And the colour died away out of her face.

"I have heard what I can scarcely believe," Philip replied ; as he stood

moodily stirring his tea, and never noticing his wife's very anxious face. "Simpson has been with me this evening, and he tells me the curate Clifford engaged to take his place at Leigh-Delamere during his absence is named Atherton—the Rev. Ralph Atherton! It is scarcely likely there are two Ralph Athertons in the world, much less in orders?"

"It must be Ralph. Only think, dear Ralph actually at Leigh!—living within a mile or two of Redenham, and I know nothing of it! How very delightful!" Ethelind exclaimed, forgetting every thing else in her joy but the prospect of again meeting some of her own family. There was no responding joy in Philip's face; a dark cloud had gathered upon his brow.

"I don't understand how it has all happened," he said, stirring his tea so vigorously as to indicate the war raging in his breast. "I think Clifford had no business to appoint any man to the curacy without consulting me. In ordinary cases, no doubt, it rests exclusively with the rector; but here—close under our windows, within a stone's-throw of one's house—it is not at all pleasant to find people put into office you literally know nothing about, and assuredly would rather not meet."

"I can imagine under some circumstances it might be awkward," Ethel replied, scarcely understanding the drift of her husband's complaint; "but I am sure I, for one, feel most grateful to him for giving it to Ralph. How delightful to think I have the most distant chance of seeing dear mamma or Gracie!"

Philip saw it was useless dissembling the truth any longer from Ethelind. It was time now she learnt the price at which her present happiness had been purchased. He set his cup and saucer on the table, and then turning round to her, he said, "It is natural enough that you should be delighted at finding your brother-in-law so near you, Ethelind. You cannot be expected to see, at present, the serious inconveniences and annoyances such a close neighbourhood will occasion us. I cannot receive him here in any other light than as the curate of the parish; neither can I possibly allow you to have free and unrestricted intimacy with your family at the Rectory. They say he has lately married."

"Married!" Ethel exclaimed. "Ralph married!"

But Philip's cold resolute look checked her: "It will be a painful struggle for you, I believe; I have tried to prepare you for it, and I had hoped your own good sense would have pointed out to you the utter impossibility of your keeping up any thing like intimacy with your own family now. When a woman marries, it is well understood she gives up father and mother and every thing for the sake of her husband. I know you have been dwelling vainly on the time when you should renew your intercourse with your mother and sisters. I have been unwilling to wound you needlessly by speaking out plainly hitherto. I had hoped my systematic checks on your writing home would have awakened you to the truth, and saved me the present unpleasant necessity for plain speaking. The time is come when the truth can no longer be disguised. You may

guess, then, my extreme annoyance when I found your brother actually located in my own parish."

Philip had intentionally kept his eyes fixed on the fire; he feared his own resolution if he caught a glimpse of the effects of his hard speech on Ethel's expressive face. Every word he had spoken had fallen like a stone on her heart. She felt too stunned for tears, and her white lips quivered as she asked in a low and scarcely audible tone, "if she was to understand from what he had said that henceforth she was to have no intercourse whatever with her own family."

"I will not say that," Philip replied, in a tone of undisguised annoyance. "As the curate of Leigh, of course I shall be necessitated to notice your brother; but I want you clearly to understand that only in that light can I have any thing to do with him. You ought by this time, Ethelind, to be as much aware as I am that, though I married you, I had no intention whatever of connecting myself with all your family. Your path in life and theirs are widely different. You will soon learn to see how wisely such things are ordered. To break through the distinctions and grades which the necessities of the social system have drawn round us would entail endless confusion and discomfort. Of course, at present, I do not expect you to acknowledge all this; but I do expect you to trust to my better knowledge and acquaintance with the world, and cheerfully to yield to my wishes."

Poor Ethelind, how the certainty of what had only now and then flashed across her as a doubt now broke upon her mental vision! How her heart died within her at the cold, unyielding tones of that voice which until now had never spoken a harsh word in her ears! What Philip had most dreaded was a violent flood of tears; but no tears came to her relief. Her voice shook so much, however, she had great difficulty in framing her words correctly.

"I should like to know, Philip," she ventured at last to say, "exactly what you wish me to do. I suppose it will not be possible to avoid meeting Ralph and his wife, and my mother or sisters, if they ever come to Leigh. They may call here; I do not know that they will; but if they should—if I by any chance meet them—you do not surely mean that I am to pass them by and not speak? You would hardly expect me to do that?"

"This is just the annoyance of which I complain, and not without cause. Your brother's good sense should have told him to have spared you these difficulties." Philip took up the poker and vigorously stirred the fire. The cold, hard look was on his face which Ethelind so dreaded; but she never looked up at him, as he stood leaning on the mantelpiece, nor he down on her bent head.

"Then I am to pass them by!" she said with a great effort. "I will try and do it, but you must let me write one line to Ralph, and tell him why I do so. It would break my heart that they should think I had grown to forget them—that I had become proud towards my own

kindred. I will be very careful, Philip," she added submissively, "if you will let me write this once."

"And make a fool of yourself and me too," Philip replied impatiently, as the difficulties of his position forced themselves more fully on him. "No! Let there be no nonsense of that sort for the gossips to chatter about. If they call, well and good; you must receive them as you would Mr. Clifford and his wife, but no more. If you choose to call on them, do so; but let there be no intimacy—no fuss—no scenes. Above all, don't let them look upon you as a martyr, and all that sort of nonsense; if you do, you will drive me wild. If you give large parties, of course invite them, just as you will ask any other of the clergymen in the neighbourhood. Do you understand? As the curate of Leigh Moss, your brother is as good as any one else. Beyond that, I will have nothing whatever to do with him or his!"

From her youth upwards, tears had been Ethelind's relief for every kind of excitement,—“floods of tears,” as Grace called them, which would come down suddenly in the midst of sunshine, and through which, like the sun in an April shower, her smiles would come flitting back before the drops were dried from her cheeks. But there were no tears now. A sense of oppression and wrong, quite new to her, and quite undeserved, was burning within her bosom and almost stifling her. She seemed to feel intuitively that it was Barbara's doing; but it cut her to the heart that Philip should have been cowardly enough to listen to his mother and sisters, and deliberately plan such cruel schemes against her. Were not her relations as dear to her as they were to him? Had she not as great a right to be proud of them as Philip had of his kindred? Surely money was not the standard by which he valued society! If it was but the exclusiveness of a set, no one surely in that set could condemn him for at least treating with proper deference and respect the family from whom he had chosen his wife. Then she called to mind how often, when writing home, Philip had framed excuses for delaying her letters, and she learnt to see with sharpened eyes that all which had hitherto been so bright and fair was but the semblance of necessity, put on to aid a purpose, and to gloss over a breach of faith. Ethelind took up her embroidery and tried to work, but her hand shook and the needle would not go into the right place. She took a book and pretended to read, but the lines were dancing up and down, and her thoughts would run off into their own current. Philip threw himself down on the sofa with the newspaper in his hand, which he crunched and crackled and turned, until it almost drove his wife beside herself; but neither of them spoke. At last Ethelind, who could bear it no longer, rose up and lit her candle; and Philip, who seemed, without looking, to know exactly what she was doing, opened the door for her to pass out. Two burning spots on her cheeks were the only signs of emotion she gave. Philip never spoke, but, as he closed the door after her, he threw himself at full length on the sofa, to consider, in this very awkward state of things,

what was next to be done. He had been so angry at suddenly finding the well-planned schemes which it had taken months to carry out frustrated by one unthought-of movement of Ralph Atherton's, that he had rushed headlong into Ethelind with his grievance, forgetful how well he had withstood his mother's and sister's entreaties entirely to prohibit all intercourse with Ethel's family, and how the patient, quiet hope which he knew she placed confidently in him, to take her once more to her mother's arms, was working its sure way to his at length yielding to her wishes. But that was entirely over now. If the Athertons meant to force themselves upon him, they should find he was not to be so lightly dealt with. They must take the consequences of their own ill-advised conduct. He had broken the ice now with Ethelind, he was bound in honour to his own family to go through with the work he had commenced. Ethelind would be hurt and annoyed at his plain speaking, no doubt; it was natural enough that she should be; but she would recover herself after a time, and, with her own natural good sense, would learn to see it all in its proper light.

Ethel dismissed Valerie as quickly as she could, and went to bed, that she might brood in quietness and solitude over the sickness of her bruised spirit. And Philip, unwilling to encounter her tears or entreaties, which he believed would be sure to follow her present excitement, sat over his dressing-room fire, until it was so late that it was useless, he thought, undressing; so he threw himself at length on the sofa-bed in the room, as the first streaks of morning were beginning to dawn in the eastern sky, to catch half an hour's broken rest before the sun rose above the purple tops of the distant hills.

"Sir Philip bid me tell you, my lady, he has breakfasted, and has ridden over to Leigh to see his steward," Stephens said, as Ethelind, with a pale face and a racking headache, made her tardy appearance in the breakfast-room. It was Friday morning. On Sunday they would go to church. It was impossible she could first meet her brother in the church. She could not trust her nerves to such a cruel ordeal, and with Philip beside her watching her the whole time; and therefore, loth as she felt now to see the dear faces for whom she had been so long pining, the effort must be made, and she would set off at once.

Robert was ordered to bring round the carriage and ponies, and after her interview with Mrs. Blake, an ordeal sufficient to damp a stouter heart than poor Ethie's, she started on her mission to Leigh-Delamere. The fresh air revived her, drove away the feeling of languor and fatigue which oppressed her, and the very attempt she made to manage her spirited little ponies gave life and energy to her, and a little colour to her cheeks. Descending at the gate, and bidding Robert drive home, and return for her in an hour, Lady Leigh made her way across the little flower-garden, gay with its bright spring-flowers, to the entrance-door of the Rectory. Grace, who had been busily engaged in helping Charlotte in her bed-making, had caught sight of Ethelind from one of the windows

as she stepped lightly across the gravel-path; and flying downstairs, without pausing a moment to consider her own not over-tidy appearance, after the fanning and fluttering of sheets and blankets, ruthlessly discomposing her glossy braids, opened the door to her herself, and in one moment the two sisters, without a word spoken by either, were locked in one long convulsive embrace in each other's arms. Large tears flowed from the eyes of each, as again and again the warm, loving embrace was renewed. At last Grace drew Ethel into the little room which Katie called her drawing-room; and Ralph came in from his study, and Katie had to be fetched, in her plain gingham gown and brown-holland apron, fresh from the kitchen, to be introduced to her new sister; and Ethelind, in her intense delight, had half forgotten her annoyances, and was asking question upon question of Grace and Ralph about her mother, and Margaret, and Susannah. Neither Ralph nor Grace could but be struck by the marked improvement in Ethelind's appearance. Grown taller and stouter, and more fully developed in figure and beauty, and with an indescribable and all-pervading grace in every movement, which gives a far higher charm than even beauty itself, they could not take their eyes from her, nor wonder if she became the courted, the admired, the flattered of her own exclusive circle. No wonder Sir Philip should be proud of her; they felt very justly so themselves. And now she was with them again, after nearly twelve months' absence, and Grace had a thousand questions to ask, and hardly, in her intense delight, knew when or where to begin.

"And you are very, very happy?" Grace said, as she sat at Ethel's feet, looking up lovingly into her face; "and have never regretted running away from us all, darling?"

"Oh, so happy!" Ethel replied, with a faint tinge of colour on her cheek, at what she felt to be the truth, though not quite the whole truth. "I only wanted you to share it with me. You would so have enjoyed the lovely scenery, the curious old foreign towns, the grand old cathedrals, and the strange adventures we met with; but I knew well it could not be, so at first I tried to write to you; but even that failed. We moved about so irregularly, and Philip never planned a day beforehand, and he was so particular about letters missing us, that I was obliged to give up the hope of hearing from you, and learn to be patient. But, oh, darling, you don't know how much I longed to get one little scrap of news from home."

"And Mrs. Leigh, and Sir Philip's sisters," Grace asked, with a mischievous look dancing in her bright eyes, "are they really such dreadful monsters as we used to think them?"

Ethelind's face changed. "Oh, Grace," she exclaimed, with a heavy sigh, as if to shake off the oppression which weighed her down; "oh, Grace, you cannot tell what a horror I have of those people! I bore it for a fortnight, in London, on our return from abroad, and I hoped I had shaken them off when I came here. But Philip has written to them to

come down to us. They have entire influence over Philip. He does just what they bid him, and they will separate us from each other, I know, if they can. So you must not be hurt, dearest," she added nervously, and with a heightened colour, "if I do not ask you freely to Redenham when they are with me. You won't think me unkind or forgetful, will you?" she added, as she turned appealingly to her brother and sister. "Philip is so different, so thoughtful and kind, when we are away from them; but directly they come near him, they will rule him entirely."

Ralph came and sat down by his sister's side. "Do you know, Ethie," he said, "I have been in trouble ever since I learnt that Redenham was in my parish. When I accepted the curacy, I did not know any thing about the place or the people. In fact, I had it through a friend. I have feared my being here might lead your husband to suppose I had other views in locating myself so close to him. But for that I should have joined those who welcomed your arrival, and I should have called yesterday on Sir Philip. As it is, I leave him to make the advance."

Ethelind's colour came and went. She would have been wiser, perhaps, had she told the exact truth; but she hesitated in how far she could exceed the limits Philip had bade her keep to, and with a true wife's sensitiveness to any insinuation, however shadowy or groundless, against her husband, she merely stammered out the hope, that, however little either Philip or herself appeared to wish for unrestricted intercourse with the Rectory, it would be in appearance only, and they must not for a moment attribute it to any other motive. Gradually she hoped, she said,—alas, how faint the real hope grew in Ethel as she thought of it!—that the incubus of his mother's and sisters' pride would die away, and that her own influence would strengthen as theirs declined. And Ralph and Grace and Katie all assured her, over and over again, that she might set her mind at rest on that score; they never, come what would, should think ill of her. And though it did not satisfy her, and the time came for Robert's return with the ponies; and she had sent long loving messages and pretty presents to her mother and Margaret and Susannah, and left the ornaments for Grace and Kate; and had listened to their admiration of her carriage and ponies,—Ethelind went back to Redenham at last soothed in heart, but by no means fully satisfied with this one interview with her own family.

When Ethelind reached Redenham, she found carriages and callers from all quarters awaiting her. In ordinary circumstances, she would have felt dreadfully nervous at the idea of encountering so many strangers, and Philip not there to introduce her and help her through her difficulties. But a strange spirit of contradiction had come over her, puzzling even herself; and, calm and collected, she moved about from one group of morning callers to another, finding by chance the right thing to say and do, and winning golden opinions from them all; not only for her extreme

beauty, which none could deny her, but her childlike simplicity and easy unaffected manner, under an ordeal which of itself would have been trying to more experienced wives.

Ethel was dressed, and waiting the announcement of dinner in her own pretty morning-room, when the door opened and Philip put his head in to see if she were there. He had encountered Lady Gwynne's carriage as he drove out of Leigh, and had had to listen for full ten minutes to their rapturous admiration of his young wife, and the graceful way in which she had welcomed them; and, as she was one of that privileged set whose verdict stamps its irrevocable seal on all aspirants to fame, Philip could not help feeling gratified, and his vanity flattered and his ruffled pride soothed, by Lady Gwynne's enthusiasm; and he came into his wife's room in a much pleasanter frame of mind than when they had parted the evening before.

The electioneering expedition, too, into which his steward had decoyed him had raised his spirits, and revived some of the old political zeal which had been slumbering for so many months; and not unwilling to break the awkwardness of a *tête-à-tête* with his wife, which, to tell the truth, he rather dreaded, he availed himself of the excuse to bring back with him his steward, the leading lawyer, and the surgeon at Leigh—all active, zealous supporters of the new Ministry.

"I am in a dreadful fright about my dinner," Ethelind said, as Philip enumerated his guests. "I cannot tell at all what Blake will send up to table. She overrules me in every thing I pretend to order; and if I were to send down and inquire, I do not think she would let me know. If you would but speak to her, Philip, yourself, or send a message by Stephens?" And Philip disappeared into the housekeeper's room.

It was quite useless Mrs. Blake volunteering a long story of her "capabilities" to her master, or the value set on her by the Marchioness of Liddington. He soon stopped that story by a look and gesture which seriously flustered and discomposed that yellow-ribboned functionary. "Now, Mrs. Blake," he said, in his sternest and gravest voice, "you must send up, at half-past seven o'clock, a dinner for five; and such a dinner as a gentleman is not ashamed to see on his table. What you have hitherto favoured us with has been perfectly uneatable. Simpson tells me there is no lack of good things in the larder; so look about you. Remember, I never complain of a cook twice. If you do not do your work well, I must find a substitute who will do better." And not waiting for the volley of protestations and testimonials which were ready to be hurled at him from the indignant lady of the lower regions of Redenham, he stalked out of the housekeeper's room to his guests, who were in the library, still busily discussing their probabilities of success in case of the threatened general election.

Ethelind looked remarkably well in her pale-blue silk dress and black lace polka-jacket; and the guests departed full of the extreme loveliness, and childlike simplicity, and unconscious grace of Sir Philip's young wife.

"You did so well last night," Philip said, as they sat at breakfast, "I really think I might have spared Barbara her long journey. And Stephens tells me you had plenty of callers yesterday. There is one thing; Barbara will take some of the fatigue off you, and manage that gorgon in the kitchen better than you can do. That woman is enough to frighten any one into submission—short of a Leigh! My mother could never have seen her, surely, or she would not have sent her here."

"I think, if you please, I should prefer managing my own house," Ethelind said, in a meek voice, which almost trembled at its own audacity. "There is no need to seek Barbara's help in these things. Though, of course, if you wish to have her here as a guest, I cannot object. But it will neither be right towards the servants or myself that any one but you or I should exercise authority over them."

"Oh, if that is the order of the day, by all means let it be so. I only thought of it to spare you trouble and annoyance. The difficulty must be overcome at some time or another; and I think you are quite right to meet it at once, and have done with it. If Mrs. Edwards had been here, it would have been altogether a different matter,—she had lived here so many years, she seemed to belong to the place, and besides, she knew exactly what was right and proper in a large establishment like this. Why my mother ever thought of superseding her, I can't imagine."

"Perhaps she would return to us," Ethel ventured to say. "Stephens told me yesterday she was living near your cousin Ann, in the Isle of Wight. Do you think I should be wrong in writing to inquire?" she added timidly.

"As I told you before," Philip replied, "I shall leave all the details of housekeeping in your hands; I hate being worried with these things above every thing. Let me have a good dinner, well dressed, at the time I order it; and so long as you and Simpson contrive that there shall be no unnecessary waste going on in the various departments of the household, I don't care to hear any thing about your proceedings." And Philip rose up from the breakfast-table, and left Ethelind to make out as best she could what would be required of her in her new responsibilities.

It was Sunday morning, and long after the church-bells had ceased to chime for service, and the parishioners had dropped one by one into their seats, and Ralph had delayed as long as he could do so the commencement of the morning service, the Redenham carriage, with its gay retinue of liveried servants, and its splendid pair of grays in their silver-mounted harness, drew up at the churchyard gate; and as Ethelind and her husband walked up the aisle, every eye was turned simultaneously on the new-comers. Even Grace could not withstand the temptation to raise her head from her Prayer-book, as her lips mechanically made the responses, that she might get one look at Philip's tall manly figure, and be able to form some judgment, as she fancied herself wise enough to do, as to the future relationship which would exist between them and Ethel's husband. But tall and upright and handsome as he looked, his coun-

tenance was as impassible to Grace's scrutiny as human features could be. Ethelind's colour was bright and her heart beat audibly; as she sank down upon her knees on the velvet cushion before her, she hardly dare raise her head, and not until the prayers were nearly over had she at all recovered her self-possession.

Many hearts, however, besides Ethelind's beat quicker than usual that morning; more, perhaps, than cared to acknowledge such a weakness. Ralph's voice trembled for one moment; but a man sooner recovers his equanimity than a woman, and one glance at Sir Philip's impassible face completely restored his self-possession.

Katie was in a strange state of nervous dread lest her husband should make some startling blunder, or break down entirely, or, in his anxiety to do his best, make a less favourable impression on his audience than usual. To all outward appearance Philip was the only unmoved worshipper within the walls of that small parish church. Quietly and calmly he opened his Prayer-book, and joined audibly in the responses, and, when the sermon commenced, kept his eyes steadily fixed on the beautiful east window above the altar, which had been Ann Leigh's memorial offering to the memory of her parents and brother.

But wife though she was, and therefore sensitively alive to the good opinions of others regarding her husband's sermons, Katie might have spared herself any anxiety on Ralph's account. There could be no doubt he possessed his father's gift, with a full rich voice that, without any apparent exertion, enabled him to fill the farthest corners of the church, so that the old and hard-of-hearing had no excuse for staying away. But there were not many of his scattered congregation who would have wished to do so. The very simplicity of his sermons made them liked. He went straight away to the point, with little or no circumlocution, and without that ornamental and flowery flow of words which constitutes much of what is called "style," and which after forty minutes' hard listening often leaves the listener as little the wiser as if he had stayed at home. All that he said bore the evident marks of deep thought and patient study, and it possessed also that sure claim on a listener's attention—the unmistakable stamp of *reality*—the certainty that every word was spoken from the earnest convictions of the preacher.

No wonder if, while Ethelind listened to those familiar tones, and thought of her father's sermons at Wylminstre, the tears stole into her eyes, and her heart overflowed with loving remembrances of the mother's love she was longing for; and when it was all over, before any one else left their seats, Sir Philip had led her out of the church, and she had taken her seat in the carriage, and the order "Home" had been given by her husband, almost before Grace had recovered her self-possession, or Ralph had descended the pulpit-steps.

"And so ends our intercourse with the Leighs," Ralph said, as he held the gate open for his wife and sister to pass into their little garden. "There can be no mistake now as to our future course." And, annoyed

even more than he cared to acknowledge by the manner in which Sir Philip had thus publicly ignored them, he felt himself seriously called on to decide at once on what his plans of action should be.

Grace went straight upstairs to her own room, where, tossing aside her bonnet, she sat down before her little writing-table, and burying her face in her hands, burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping. It was useless attempting to stave off the bitter flood—it would come, over and over again, as she thought of her darling sister, cut off entirely from her own relatives; and then, as she at last slowly wiped them away, she drew paper and pens to her side, and, as her last resource, commenced pouring her sorrows and perplexities into Margaret's ever-ready ear.

"What a pity that man should be such a tyrant!" Katie said to herself, as she laid aside her best bonnet and mantle, to assist Charlotte in laying the cloth for their early dinner. "He is very handsome. Indeed, I think I never yet saw such a superb couple as they are; he so stalwart and strong in his stern manly beauty, and she so gentle and shy, looking up to him as if he were her father. I doubt if I could have loved him. That bright glittering eye, and the firm compressed lips, do not look made for yielding; and a man who does not know how to yield at the right time is not a being to love. 'Real love casteth out fear!'" And Katie's eyes involuntarily wandered away to the bit of bright sunshine which streaked their one gravel-path, where Ralph, in his own manly beauty, was slowly pacing up and down with his hands behind him, and his hat drawn down over his eyes, in deep thought, pondering over the necessity for quitting Leigh-Delamere, and feeling for the first time the cares and responsibilities which spring up in a man's path the moment he links another's fate with his own.

"Well, little woman," he said, as he came in at last and sat down in his own arm-chair, "it is no good disguising the truth—we must go; you took me for better for worse, for richer for poorer. The worse is soon come, sooner than I had thought it would: but I can see no alternative. To-morrow I shall write to Mr. Clifford. What will the Harfords say when they hear how I misled them into believing I had a home for you? I cannot explain my reasons for throwing up my curacy. No one would comprehend them, I think, perhaps, if I did. And yet, at present, I can see no alternative."

"Dear Ralph, don't distress yourself about any thing the Harfords or any body else may think of you. If it is right to do so, we will do it, cheerfully and willingly, for Ethel's sake. It seems hard upon you, certainly, to be driven away by prejudice, or pride, or whatever other motive may be influencing Sir Philip; but there can be no question about its being your duty to do so, if Ethelind is made to suffer by our continuing here. Look, here is the *Ecclesiastical Gazette*," she said, taking up the paper from the drawer it had been put aside in when it arrived by the morning's post. "Surely, so many people wanting curates and so many

curates wanting curacies, there must be something or other which will suit us, if not so well as this, yet better than no duty at all."

Ralph laughed. "You will grow wiser, little woman, I can tell you," he said, "before you have been another six months a wife. You will find out rectors want the largest possible amount of work at the lowest possible remuneration, and curates want the rector's stipend without his responsibilities. And so it goes."

"Yes, but that must be among unreasonable people. Now you are not unreasonable, Ralph; you would be content with what was right and proper, and you would not spare your work; and there must be fifty rectors who would rejoice to get such a curate, I am sure, if you did but know where to find them."

"In fact, you think I have but to ask and to have. Do you know, Katie, I am just as unreasonable as every ninety-nine men are out of a hundred. At all events, I should be reckoned so by those who were not interested like myself in my search. No one knows until he has tried what weary work it is hunting for a curacy which is at all worth taking, and how discouraging a task it is to have to begin your work again just as you are beginning to feel you are getting some little hold upon the people. However, that is not my greatest trouble in this case; my coming here has misled Mr. Clifford, and to bring him back to England just as he is gaining strength from the milder climate of Italy, seems almost a crime. I shall write to-night or to-morrow, and tell him circumstances have arisen which I never could have foreseen, but which will render my leaving peremptory; but that, if he will trust to me, I will put some one into my place, as carefully, as regardfully of all he could desire, as if it were my 'own charge.'"

"And he will trust you, Ralph, depend upon it. If he has once seen your honest English face, he cannot doubt you; nobody could, short of a Leigh; and I am not quite sure yet that you are not too precipitate; that Sir Philip will not change that cold scornful look of his when he finds how little he has to fear, and how much to learn, of his new brother. Perhaps, after all, he does not know that you were ignorant of Redenham being his when you came here—that you are not hoping another day to step into Mr. Clifford's place."

"No matter what he knows, Katie, or what he thinks. We must go," Ralph said, as he gazed lovingly into the bright hopeful face of his little wife. "If the Leighs are proud, I am not sure that the Athertons are less so, in their own way. I cannot live on here in peace, and feel I am a thorn in the side of any man, especially when Ethelind's happiness depends on our leaving. And Ralph got up, and took his place at dinner with a heavy load at his heart, as he thought how that bright hopeful spirit which looked so cheerily out of his Katie's soft brown eyes must in all probability be crushed out by the cares and anxieties which, even within the first six months of their short married life, were already winding their slow but certain links round his precarious fortune. Well, in-

deed, it is for the hard-working faithful servant of God that a sure reward awaits him in that hereafter to which, in his troubled passage through this world, he can turn in his greatest need as the one bright spot where harassing and weary cares never enter. But Ralph's battle of life had only just commenced. He was still hopeful himself, and vigorous; and if he chafed needlessly at the uncourteous welcome of his rich connexions, and shrunk with innate pride from forcing himself upon people who looked down upon him and tried to ignore him, it was not so much for himself he felt the sting, as it was for that gentle being who had bound up her fate with his, and who would now be thrown on the world, dependent on any chance which should enable him to secure a home for her.

The "Provincial Letters" of Pascal.

By JOHN OXENFORD.

THERE is not a book that has made more noise in the world than the collection of "Provincial Letters," written by Blaise Pascal. They are most important in the history of French literature, and somewhat important in that of polemical divinity. The opinions that are promulgated in them have been taken upon trust; and of their numerous readers, the majority, delighted with the amusement they afford, have probably reflected but little upon the controversy they represent, or have at once assumed that Pascal was in the right. To many persons the history of the "Provincials" contained in this paper will be entirely new, and may serve as a useful guide to the study of the Letters themselves.

It is necessary to begin with a survey of the condition of Jansenism towards the middle of the seventeenth century, though all pains will be taken to avoid the thorny road of controversial theology.

The diffusion of those doctrines, which, under the name of "Jansenism," caused so many theological broils in France, already distracted by the violent contests between Catholics and Protestants, began with the publication of a book, entitled *Augustinus*, in honour of the immortal Bishop of Hippo, whose opinions it ostensibly embodied. Its author, Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, devoted twenty years to its composition, and died as soon as it was completed, leaving the charge of its publication to his chaplain. The book made a noise as soon as it appeared; some receiving it as an important revelation of religious truth, others regarding it as no more than a slight modification of the Calvinistic theology which had already been condemned by the Church. On the side of the latter was the Pope, Urban VIII., who, in 1642, proscribed the *Augustinus*, not only for the formal reason that it had been published without due authority, but also on account of its theological tendency. Hereupon the existing controversy, instead of ceasing, grew more violent; for the Jansenists tried to invalidate the bull, which they regarded as surreptitious, while the celebrated Arnauld (of whom more presently) undertook the defence of Jansenius himself. In the mean while, that the arena of discussion might be narrowed, and the points in dispute rendered more apparent, the doctrines of the *Augustinus*, which was a bulky work, were reduced into five propositions, and submitted to the censure of the Sorbonne* by Nicholas Cornet, Syndic of the theological faculty at Paris. This led to a good deal of appealing. The Sorbonne referred the propositions to the French bishops, then in assembly, who sent them to the

* It may not be superfluous to remark, that the name Sorbonne comprehends the entire theological faculty of the University of Paris, and that its authority was all-important in ecclesiastical matters.—J. O.

Pope, Innocent X., who, in his turn, committed the investigation of the affair to a select body of cardinals and theologians. After a serious deliberation, which lasted two years, and took place towards its close in the presence of the Pope himself, the five propositions were, on the 31st of March 1653, condemned as heretical.

The Jansenists, who were perhaps the most adroit shufflers that ever slipped about unscrupulously on the surface of the earth, were not to be put down by such a trifle as this. Perhaps some innocent reader, to whom this old story is new, will rejoice at the contumacy of the Jansenist, whom some good book may have taught him to regard as a sort of semi-Protestant, and therefore entitled to his sympathies. Perhaps he expects that liberty of conscience will be strictly maintained against the assaults of papal despotism. Nothing of the sort is about to take place; and let me here briefly warn any of my readers who have been lessoned into affection for the Jansenists, that there never was a clique less entitled to the sympathy of real Protestants than this celebrated knot of slippery theologians. When we come to the sad fact that the great, the good, the preëminently pious Pascal,—the author of the admirable *Pensées*,—made himself the tool of such a crew, we shall find ourselves strongly inclined to compare him to the innocent Oliver Twist, as he appeared when his patron Bill Sykes put him through the shutter.

To return to our narrative. The censure of Innocent X., pronounced in 1653, was adopted in the same year by the bishops of France, under the presidency of Mazarin; and if there had been a particle of honesty in the Jansenists, they would either have ceased to exist, or separated from the Church of Rome. But they wished to avoid both these alternatives, and accordingly they devised an expedient, by which many over-shrewd attorneys whose names have been struck off the rolls would be put altogether to the blush. They bowed their heads in perfect submission to the papal authority; they detested the five condemned propositions quite as much as he did, perhaps a trifle more, but then, they added, they were not bound to believe that these same five propositions were to be found in the *Augustinus*. The Pope was infallible in matters of doctrine, but not in matters of fact, and therefore they might assume that the propositions had not been condemned in the sense of Jansenius.

All this quibbling is to no purpose unless it is followed up by a proof that the five propositions* are not contained in Jansenius's book. Now the fact is, that in substance they *are* there, and a declaration to the contrary would be as veracious as that of a man who asserts that a proposition, stating that the square of the hypotenuse equalled both the squares together of the other sides of the right angled triangle, was not to be found in Simson's Euclid. Such a man, however, proves incorri-

* To avoid the rigour of religious controversy, I have abstained from citing the propositions. It is enough to say, that they embody opinions on the recondite subjects of Grace and Election, which may broadly, though perhaps not accurately, be called Calvinistic.—J. O.

gible. You vainly fancy that you can deal with him by opening the "Elements" at the forty-seventh proposition of the first book, and reading thus: "In any right-angled triangle, the square which is described upon the side subtending the right angle is equal to the sum of the squares described upon the sides which contain the right angle." But our imaginary friend will simply shake his head, and say: "That's all very fine, but I don't hear a word about the hypothenuse." Losing your temper a little, you exclaim, slightly elevating your voice, "But the side subtending the right angle is the hypothenuse." "Very likely," responds the adversary, with disgusting calmness; "all I have to say is, that the hypothenuse is not mentioned." "Then we are disputing, not about things, but about words?" "I am not disputing at all; I simply said that a proposition about an hypothenuse is not to be found in Simson's Euclid, and I say so still."

Such a man as our imaginary disputant could be "written down an ass" without much trouble, for the case lies in a nut-shell. But it was otherwise with the Jansenists, who had to deal with a big book, and well knew how to employ that advantage. Only a chosen few would take the trouble of digesting the bulky tome of Jansenius, and of ascertaining whether it involved the doctrines contained in the five propositions; and therefore he who shouted "No" had as good a chance of being believed as he who cried "Yes." There is, I have said, no doubt whatever that the doctrines expressed by the five propositions are in the *Augustinus*, and that the interest taken in the Jansenists by a certain section of Protestants solely arises from the conviction that they held these doctrines in common with themselves. Any reader who wishes to investigate the matter further, without wading through the Latin folio of Jansenius, is referred to the Abbé Maynard's edition of the "Provinciales." There, in a note appended to the introduction to the seventeenth and eighteenth letters, will be found the five condemned propositions, placed side by side with the corresponding passages from Jansenius.

Glorying in their audacious shuffle, the Jansenists went on vaunting the excellence of their *Augustinus*, and protesting their submission to the Pope's bull. They were not long allowed to enjoy their convenient position unmolested; for in 1654 the bishops of France declared that the five propositions were virtually contained in Jansenius's book, which was therefore comprised in their condemnation; and in 1656 Pope Alexander VII. (the successor of Innocent) seemed to preclude the possibility of all future subterfuge, by peremptorily declaring that the censure of his predecessor applied to the doctrine of Jansenius and the contents of his book.

We have already passed the time when a new interest to the theological controversy was given by the publication of Pascal's first Provincial Letter. Hence we may conveniently turn from the contemplation of Jansenism in general, to that particular phase in which it appears in connection with the patriarch of French prose.

Jansenism was first introduced into France by the Abbé Saint-Cyran,

an intimate friend and fellow-student of Jansenius at the University of Louvain. He made many proselytes, and was confined at Vincennes by Cardinal Richelieu, who regarded him as a "dangerous man." In political history, the Jansenists generally appear among the adversaries of the French Monarchy, now mixed up in the conspiracies against Richelieu, now allied with the chiefs of the Fronde, now forming the ranks of the opposition in the Parliament. To this rule there were exceptions, but not sufficient to destroy its general validity.

Of course the imprisonment of St. Cyran caused him to be regarded as a martyr, and his authority was rendered greater than ever. Determined to become a theological leader, he cast his eyes upon an institution that seemed exactly fitted for his purpose, a community of nuns, situated in the Faubourg St. Jacques at Paris, and known by the now world-celebrated name of "Port-Royal." This community had originally resided in the Abbaye de Port-Royal-des-Champs, and after falling into a state of laxity, had been reformed in 1608 by the Superior Angélique Arnauld, under whom it so greatly flourished, that the place of residence was found too narrow, and a removal to Paris occurred in 1625. But the old convent was not abandoned for ever; and when St. Cyran had established himself at Port-Royal, where he completely ruled the abbess and all her nuns, he hit on the happy expedient of using the deserted spot as a place for assembling those learned recluses who have gained for their sect so high a position in the history of literature. It was the policy of the Jansenists to carry out to the fullest possible extent the apostolic advice as to the expediency of being all things to all men. To the sternly devotional they appeared a body of self-mortifying ascetics, emulating the fame of the primitive anchorets; to the men of letters they seemed a literary society, formed for the advancement of sound learning. Even the fine ladies and gentlemen, whose dissipation gave such a pleasant hue to the squabbles between Mazarin and the Fronde, were not beyond their reach; and there is on record a pretty speech addressed by Singlin (who succeeded St. Cyran in the direction of Port-Royal) to the famous Duchess de Longueville: "Persons of your condition ought to content themselves with being sober in their mode of life, without submitting to a course of austerity and abstinence that would be as dangerous to the body as to the mind." There is nothing very shocking in this speech, till we consider that it comes from the religious chief of a party which ostensibly admitted of no medium between the saintly ascetic and the utter sinner, and was constantly assailing the Jesuits on account of their accommodating system of morality. In short, it is only by a freak of fortune that a person who pursues an artful line of conduct, and is unscrupulous as to the means by which he obtains an end, is popularly called "Jesuitical." The word "Jansenistical," though it looks ugly, would be equally appropriate. Indeed, though there is much in the history of the contention between the two parties that is little creditable to either, it should never be forgotten that the Jesuits were always in the

interests of the Church to which they belonged, and readily submitted to her decrees when in opposition to their own opinions; while the Jansenists, professedly members of the same Church, and fully as violent as their adversaries in their zeal against the whole Protestant world, were always in a state of semi-rebellion, which they vainly tried to mask by an habitual system of shuffling and prevarication.

The Abbess of Port-Royal was, as we have already seen, Angélique Arnauld; and it may now be added, that the family of which she was a member distinguished itself in the cause of Jansenism far more than its founder, Jansenius, or its propagandist, St. Cyran. The latter died in 1643, and the whole sect was entirely in the hands of what the Abbé Maynard calls the "Tribe of Arnauld." D'Andilly Arnauld, brother to Angélique, was the patriarch,—the man of business,—the negotiator of brilliant alliances; another brother, almost young enough to be the grandson of D'Andilly, the celebrated Antoine Arnauld,—the "great Arnauld," as he is commonly called,—was theological leader and champion of the party. At him we may stop, without naming the numerous and less important members of the "tribe;" for it is to a little squabble which was caused by the "great Arnauld," and appears as an episode in the general history of Jansenism, that the world is indebted for the publication of the "Provincial Letters."

High among the protectors of Port-Royal stood the Duke de Liancourt. He does not seem to have deeply interested himself in the doctrines of the *Augustinus*; but as his wife took it into her head to turn Jansenist, he followed in her track, like a good obedient husband. One day he was confessing to a priest of St. Sulpice, who closely questioned him on his connection with the Jansenists, and as—with the fear of the Duchess before his eyes—the Duke seemed by no means disposed to break it off, the priest did not at once give him absolution. Here was an occasion for a very pretty quarrel. The "great Arnauld," eager to make a noise in the world, published a "Letter to a Duke and Peer," in which he strongly attacked the luckless priest; and, on being answered, followed it up with a second epistle, to the same address as the first. This contained two propositions, which were extracted and referred to the consideration of the Sorbonne.

At the time of these proceedings, Arnauld and Pascal were both at Port-Royal. The latter, who was then about thirty-two years of age, had acquired a high celebrity in the world as a mathematician of singular genius, and an adept in physical science, but had recently determined to abandon all other intellectual pursuits, and devote himself entirely to religious exercises. Unfortunately this pious resolution was made amid circumstances that caused him to throw himself into the arms of the Jansenists.

A conversation that took place at this juncture is recorded as the immediate cause of Pascal's first letter. In compliance with the wishes of his friends, who thought he ought to say something in his own defence, Arnauld had written a paper, which he read aloud in the *sanctum* of

Port-Royal, and though he was surrounded by his worshipers, the dead silence which followed his reading showed that, in their opinion, he had made a lamentable failure. "I see that you think this very bad," quoth Arnauld, "and I am inclined to agree with you." Then, turning to Pascal, he added, "But you, who are young and curious, you ought to do something." (*Vous devriez faire quelque chose.*) The hint was sufficient; Pascal lost no time in doing *something*, and it was something that made more noise in the world than any thing that had yet been written in the French language.

The first of the *Letters written to a Provincial by one of his Friends* was published by Pascal on the 23d of January 1656, and, like the second, which followed it in a few days, is a masterpiece of comic humour. The writer, who is supposed to reside in Paris, is apparently a simple man, of Jansenistic predilections, who questions his theological acquaintance on certain theological subtleties, and with Socratic shrewdness and Socratic urbanity always puts them in the wrong. Nothing can be more pleasant than the manner in which the conversations are carried on, or more pungent than the ridicule which assails the minute distinctions of school divinity with the weapons of common sense. You can almost see the writer bustling about in great perturbation from one teacher to another, and pretending to be greatly puzzled when he finds a *pouvoir prochain* that is no power at all, and that *la grace suffisante* is not sufficient for any thing. The serious purpose of these droll letters was to render Jansenism acceptable to the most uncultivated understanding, by showing that the objections against it are absurd, to a degree implying dishonesty in its adversaries. Arnauld and Co. must have felt at once that they had gained an important ally. Volumes of heavy controversy might have been written, without attracting a single regard save from professed theologians and zealous partisans; but here were two comical little papers, which might be easily read by all the world, and which all the world, without caring a farthing for the parties at issue, could pronounce to be vastly amusing. The stern ascetics of Port-Royal had "fun" on their side, and the "Provincial Letters" were at once the rage at Paris.

These early letters are, as I have said, masterpieces of comic humour; but when we reflect on the sublime sanctity which was the distinguishing characteristic of Pascal, and which was of a kind scarcely to be found save in the earliest ages of the Church,—when we reflect on the halo of pure glory that surrounds him as the author of the *Pensées*,—we must pause in our laugh to find that, by the peculiar turn taken by his religious fervour, he has become, we may almost say, the Jack-pudding of an unscrupulous and artful faction. The saint—of whose self-mortification, of whose religious "experiences" at this very epoch, there can be no doubt (for what is called his "second" or great "conversion" took place in 1654)—anticipates the position of Voltaire, as the grand *persifleur* of his day, and renders religious subjects comic in the eyes of all the wits and libertines who hovered about the reigning beauties of Paris.

We must here return to the affair of Arnauld, whose "Second Letter to a Duke and Peer" had been referred to the Sorbonne towards the end of 1655. Two questions, one *de facto*, the other *de jure*, were thus brought under consideration. The first was, whether Arnauld was guilty of temerity,—a comparatively slight offence,—by declaring, in his "Letter to a Duke and Peer," that he had read the book of Jansenius, and could not find in it the five propositions condemned by the Pope—nay, that he condemned them himself, wherever they were found; even in the book of Jansenius, if they were found there, after all. The more important question *de jure* was, whether a proposition on the subject of Grace was deemed heretical. After some deliberation, a committee was appointed to examine the letter, and the purport of its condemnation was so clear, that the partisans of Arnauld sought the aid of the Parliament, from whom they claimed an appeal against the appointment of the committee, which Arnauld said was composed of his adversaries, and consequently could not be impartial. Nothing was gained by this movement: the Parliament decided that the Sorbonne should be allowed to proceed in its accustomed manner, by means of the committee it had appointed.

It is worthy of observation, that Arnauld never dreamed of questioning the authority of the Sorbonne till he saw that the chances were evidently against him. On the 1st of December 1655, he published a pathetic letter, which was widely circulated, and in which he declared that he revered the Faculty as though it were his mother; but his filial devotion marvelously diminished as this corporate mother, on close examination, looked less and less Jansenistic. Several ugly fellows, belonging to the mendicant orders, sat in Sorbonne as doctors of theology; and Arnauld did his best to diminish their number, but without success. Their presence in the assemblies was no innovation; they had sat and voted long before any one had heard of the "great Arnauld," and were not to be thinned on purpose to oblige such a very doubtful subject of the Church.

His tender mother, the Faculty, invited him to be present at the proceedings which were opened on the 7th of December 1655; but he did not accept the invitation. However, he sent a letter of most formidable magnitude, which was heard with becoming resignation, and then business began. An attempt was made to prove that the five famous propositions were virtually to be found in the *Augustinus* of Jansenius; but the doctor who made the attempt was at once stopped short, on the ground that this was not the point on which the assembly had to deliberate; but that they had solely to decide, whether Arnauld had not been guilty of temerity, by denying, in the letter under discussion, that the propositions were to be found in Jansenius, when the contrary had been maintained by such high authority.

Never was the slippery character of the Jansenists more manifest than at this juncture. When Lescot, Bishop of Chartres, had proposed, in the first instance, to show that the propositions were in Jansenius, they would not allow him to proceed with his demonstration. Now, when the as-

ssembly had declared that the conduct of Arnauld, and not the theological question, was under consideration; they insisted on that examination of the *Augustinus* which they had before prevented, and made such an uproar, that the assembly was broken up through the mere physical force of the lungs.

In consequence of an application made by the Bishop of Montauban on the part of the Faculty, a *lettre de cachet* was issued by the king, ordering that the proceedings should be renewed, and carried on in a peaceful manner. Brevity also was to be respected. But even a royal mandate was of small effect where Jansenists were concerned. When the deliberations were renewed on the 10th of January, every thing was done to "burke" the question actually before the assembly, that is to say, the question respecting Arnauld's conduct; and so strong became the discussion, that the Chancellor Séguier was ordered by the king to be present at the sittings, for the mere preservation of decency and order.

On the 11th of January, the condemnation of Arnauld appeared inevitable; but just as the assembly was on the point of voting, a fresh letter came from the invincible doctor, declaring that he would not have written as he had in the "Letter to the Duke and Peer" if he had foreseen the serious objections that had been made against it. An apology to the Pope and the bishops was also contained in this artful document, by which Arnauld conceded nothing, and retracted nothing, but, with a great show of humility, left the case just where it was. On the 14th of January, the voting took place; and 130 doctors, of whom seven were bishops, condemned Arnauld for *temerity*; while 68 were of opinion that he did not merit a public condemnation, but that a private satisfaction would be sufficient. The question *de facto* being thus disposed of, the sittings were resumed on the 17th for deliberation on the question *de jure*; and the Syndic of the Faculty, foreseeing the floods of talk that would now overwhelm the assembly if a sufficient dam were not provided, suggested that half an hour by the sand-glass should be the period of discussion allowed to each doctor. When we consider the number of persons who had a right to speak, we must admit that this was not such a short allowance. The cause of brevity prevailed, and the suggestion of the Syndic was adopted, to the extreme mortification of the Jansenists, to whom no music was so agreeable as the sound of their own possibly sweet and certainly sonorous voices. However, if their speech was shortened, their noise was undiminished; and Chancellor Séguier, who had comfortably retired after the 14th, when the question *de facto* was settled, flattering himself that his peace-preserving occupation was at end, was forced to come back on the 24th, to perform a task very similar to that which in modern London would be intrusted to "an efficient body of police."

Indeed the Jansenists had become desperate. On the 26th Arnauld made a formal declaration, in presence of a notary, to the effect that he regarded the sittings of the Faculty as illegitimate, and that he had not

been allowed a fair defence, with much more to the same purpose. Arnauld's protest was communicated to the Faculty on the 29th; but the game was at an end, and on the same day his proposition was condemned as heretical by three bishops and 127 doctors, and it was decreed that if he did not submit to the censure, his name should be struck off the list of doctors. Only nine votes were recorded on the other side. These were given by close friends of Arnauld, who remained to watch the proceedings after the bulk of the Jansenistic doctors had retired, in compliance with their chief's declaration that the assembly was illegitimate.

In his third "Provincial Letter," which is dated the 9th of February, 1656 (after the censure had been passed on Arnauld), Pascal, true to his party, charges the assembly with partiality, and defends the cited propositions of Arnauld from the imputation of heresy by a reference to St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom, clearly made in the first letter. With the soundness of Arnauld's theology we have here nothing to do; but as for the charges against the assembly, they are sophistical to a degree, which shows how thoroughly the mind of an indubitably honest man may be perverted when he fights for the victory of a party, not for the cause of truth. The doctors are blamed because they did not publish a regular theological treatise in answer to the arguments of Arnauld, though it is clear that the judge of an ordinary court may as reasonably be called over the coals because he does not follow up his charge to the jury with a code of criminal law. "Monks," it is said, "are more easily to be found than reasons;" as if the immense majority against Arnauld could be explained away by the presence of a few mendicant friars. A pebble is also flung at the intrusive half-hour glass,—"*cette rare et toute nouvelle invention de la demi-heure et du sable*,"—by which the doctors freed themselves from the importunity of their Jansenistic brethren, who undertook to refute all their reasons and overwhelm them with their books. Pascal seems to forget the patience with which the doctors heard Arnauld's long paper, written as a substitute for his personal appearance, in his zeal to make out that Arnauld was condemned, not for the heresy of his opinions, but from motives of personal animosity. Nevertheless, in spite of the badness of his cause, how clearly does he show the position he wishes to establish! how fine is his irony in the following passage!

"Make your mind easy, and don't fear that you will be a heretic, if you adopt the condemned proposition. This is only bad when it is in M. Arnauld's second letter. If you won't take my word for it, you can believe M. le Moine, the most ardent of all the examiners. Conversing this morning with a doctor of my acquaintance, who asked him in what the difference consisted, and whether it was no longer permitted to say what had already been said by the Fathers of the Church, M. le Moine made this excellent answer: 'The proposition in question would be orthodox in any other mouth; it is only in M. Arnauld that it is condemned by the Sorbonne.' Admire here (added the doctor) the machinery of Molinism, which causes such prodigious revolutions in the Church, that what was catholic in the Fathers becomes heretical in M. Arnauld, while that which was heretical in the semi-Pelagians becomes orthodox in the writings of the Jesuits; that

the doctrine of St. Augustine, ancient as it is, has become an insupportable novelty, while the new inventions that are fabricated every day before our very eyes pass for the ancient faith of the Church. So saying, he left me. This information was valuable. I now understood that we had to deal with a heresy of a new kind. It is not that the opinions of M. Arnauld are heretical. Nothing is heretical but his person; it is a personal heresy. He is not heretical on account of any thing he has said or written, but simply because he is M. Arnauld. This is all that can be found against him. Whatever he may do, unless he ceases to exist altogether, he will never be a good Catholic. The grace of St. Augustine will never be the right grace so long as M. Arnauld defends it, but it would become so if he were to attack it. This would be a sure, and perhaps the only, method to establish it and destroy Molinism; such calamity does M. Arnauld inflict on the opinions he entertains."

So far the "Provincial Letters" are intimately connected with Jansenistic theology and the proceedings against M. Arnauld. In the fourth letter, dated the 25th of January 1656, he begins a different course, that is continued to the tenth, which is dated the 2d of August, and is, strictly speaking, the last of the "Provincials." It is now no longer the Jansenists who are defended, but the Jesuits who are attacked, and that not on subtle points of theology, but on broad moral grounds, perfectly intelligible to any man who is so far advanced in the study of ethics as to be aware that it is wrong to pick his neighbour's pocket, or to stick a dagger in his back. In their ambition to govern the world, the Jesuits, according to Pascal, have sought popularity by the invention of a moral code which subverts every recognised principle of law and order. Judges may take bribes, valets may perpetrate any villanies in the service of their master, bankrupts may defraud their creditors, fine gentlemen may fight duels, poltroons may shoot their enemies from behind a hedge, and all their crimes will be lightly treated by a Jesuit confessor on the strength of a nice distinction between act and intention, by which every misdeed in the world may be excused. It is to the character of the Jesuit, depicted by Pascal, that we may trace that intense hatred of the Order of Jesus which exists even among persons to whom nothing is less interesting than theological controversy. The saint, the scoffer, the essayist, the novelist, the caricaturist, is sure to acquire some popularity in any district of Christendom by "showing up" the Jesuit. Through the letters of Pascal, and the eagerness with which they were read, the Jesuit has become as established a mark all over the world as Guy Fawkes is in England for every body to pelt with squibs and crackers.

That the letters made a great stir no one can wonder. Pascal was perhaps the earliest writer in agreeable French prose,—in the tongue which is considered proper French at the present day,—from which the language of Montaigne is as different as that of the *Faërie Queene* is from the present English manner of writing and talking. Even now, when the controversy between Jesuit and Jansenist has become a mere matter of history, nothing can be more fascinating than the recorded conversations between the letter-writer and the very simple Jesuit, who lets out all the

secrets of his order one by one, on purpose, it would appear, to give his adversary an easy victory. At first we overlook the fact that the letters are half refuted by the manner in which the writer has depicted his Jesuitical instructor. If such a "Mr. Verdant Green" was a fair specimen of the order, the Jesuits must have been the least artful persons in the world—comparable only to a pick-pocket who would never venture on a handkerchief till he had first given the wearer due notice of his intentions.

The picture, however, while extremely inaccurate, is also extremely droll, and every body can laugh at a story like that of Jean d'Alba, which may be aptly cited. The imaginary Jesuit has just been explaining to the writer, on the authority of Père Bauny, a magnate of the order, that valets may remedy a deficiency in their wages by laying hands on the property of their masters; and the narrator then proceeds thus:

"'Father,' said I, 'this is precisely the case of Jean d'Alba.' 'What Jean d'Alba?' continued the father. 'What are you driving at?' 'Nay, father, have you forgotten what happened in this town in the year 1647? Where were you at that time?' 'I was giving lessons in cases of conscience at one of our colleges a long way from Paris.' 'I see, then, father, that you don't know the tale. Well, then, I must tell it you. It was told the other day by a man of veracity in a place where I happened to be. He told us that this same Jean d'Alba, having served your fathers at the College of Clermont, and not being satisfied with his wages, made off with something by way of compensation; that your brothers, becoming aware of the fact, put him in prison, on the charge of household robbery, and that the affair was brought before the Châtelet on—if I remember right—the 6th of April 1647. If he had not given all these particulars we should scarcely have believed him. The unfortunate Jean d'Alba, being interrogated, confessed that he had taken some pewter platters; but insisted that he was not on that account guilty of a theft, justifying himself by a reference to this doctrine of Father Bauny, which he propounded to the judges, adding a paper by one of your fathers, under whom he had studied cases of conscience, and who had taught him the same thing. Whereupon, M. de Montrouge, one of the most esteemed members of the fraternity, gave it as his opinion that the prisoner ought not to be acquitted on the strength of writings inculcating a doctrine which was illegal, mischievous, opposed to all laws human and divine, capable of destroying the peace of families, and of authorising every kind of domestic robbery. He was of opinion, moreover, that the too faithful disciple should be flogged before the gate of the college by the hand of the executioner, who should also burn the writings of the Jesuits on the subject of theft, with a prohibition, on pain of death, against the further diffusion of such a doctrine. This opinion was heard with great approbation, and a practical result was expected; but an incident took place which caused the judgment in this affair to be deferred. Nevertheless the prisoner disappeared, nobody knows how, and the matter was dropped.'"

The trifling circumstance that the above story is not quite true does not render it the less entertaining.

If, however, we seriously consider the principles on which Pascal proceeds when he endeavours to prove that the casuistry of the Jesuits was deliberately intended to subvert all morality, we shall soon find that no

thing can be more fallacious. The casuists, putting every case that might possibly arise within the sphere of human action, measured the culpability of deeds by the circumstances under which they were committed, and the motives to which they might be traced. Every man becomes a casuist who considers that a starving man who steals a loaf is less culpable in the eyes of the Almighty, than the fraudulent gamester who ruins his adversary by means of loaded dice; but such a casuist would be very much astonished if he learned that, by entertaining such a very common opinion, he upheld a theory favourable to theft, and was consequently deemed unworthy to hold any office of trust. And yet he would be treated just as Pascal treats the casuistical doctors. Their works were not intended for the administrators of the law, or for the guidance of the general public, but simply for the direction of confessors in dealing with their penitents. Doubtless many of the casuists went too far in accommodating the divine precepts to the foibles of humanity; and the Spanish Jesuits especially, who lived in an atmosphere of Castilian honour, and probably recollected that they were Spaniards before they were priests, showed themselves too lenient on the subject of duelling. But, after all, their faults were on the side of mercy, and were based on the sound principle that God judgeth the *heart*.

The letters that follow the tenth are not addressed to a "provincial friend," but to the Jesuits themselves. The writer has been assailed in his turn; he has lost his temper and his "fun," and wearied with his monotonous declamation, we sigh for the pleasant vein of irony and the matchless humour with which he entered upon the controversy. In the last two letters—the seventeenth and eighteenth—he returns once more to pure theology, but his endeavours to prove the conformity of the Jesuits to the standard of Roman Catholic orthodoxy may easily be turned into ridicule, if the weapons be used which he himself has furnished in his first and second letters. Pascal, the comic man, who in January 1656 held up theological subtleties to the derision of the multitude, is now as grave a hair-splitter as the veriest schoolman of them all.

I cannot better conclude this long paper than with the words of Voltaire, who cannot be suspected of undue predilection in favour of any religious body: "The Jesuits, like the members of all other religious orders, have had among them casuists, who have discussed the *pro* and *con* of questions which now are either settled or consigned to oblivion; but in honest truth, is it by the ingenious satire of the 'Provincial Letters' that we are to judge of their morality? No, but by Bourdaloue, by Cheminais, by their other preachers, by their missionaries. If we put the 'Provincial Letters' side by side with the sermons of Bourdaloue, we shall find in the former the art of raillery—of presenting indifferent matters under a comical aspect—of insulting with eloquence; but from Bourdaloue we shall learn to be indulgent to others, severe to ourselves. There is nothing more absurd, more disgraceful to humanity, than the imputation of moral laxity to men who led a life of the utmost hardship in Europe, and courted death at the extremities of Asia and America."

From Generation to Generation.

ARMED with his tourist's ticket, and bent upon hurrying forward to the lakes, the English visitor on his month's excursion sees little of Dublin beyond Trinity College, the Bank, the Post Office, the Rotunda, and the lions of Sackville Street, and most likely never even hears the name of the locality where the events which I am about to narrate took place. Yet, though it is now unfashionable and bygone, there is something peculiar in the aspect of Gardner's Place, Mountjoy Square, even in these days, which must strike the stranger at first sight. It is a row of neatly-painted, trim-looking buildings, in the very centre of which stands an old dilapidated house, with broken windows, paintless shutters, crooked iron-railings rotting away from the green stone in which they erst were fastened; between the flags in the large area grow rank weeds, and fungi flourish luxuriantly in every crevice. Passing the place after nightfall, the most reckless car-driver removes his dhudeen from his mouth, crosses himself reverently, and mutters a hurried prayer; the huge black door is free from those impertinent portraits with ribald sentences attached to them in balloon-like floatings from the mouth, which usually adorn the portals of uninhabited mansions, and the children of the neighbourhood would as soon think of laughing at a banshee as of handling the grim-looking lion's head which once did duty as a knocker at the Haunted House.

On that door stood for twenty years and upwards a brightly-polished brass-plate, engraved with the words, "Mark Lupton, Solicitor," and over its threshold passed during that period more peers, members of the legislature, brilliant officers, ay, and beautiful titled women, than ever graced the vice-regal court on a birthday drawing-room. Solicitor! the brass-plate lied all brazenly; it was but little regular legal business Mark did. Usurer, extortioner, hundred-per-cent man, grinder of the orphan, despoiler of the widow, bully of the poor, and toady of the rich, these are the titles which in strict justice should have been inscribed on Mark Lupton's door-plate. His name, his business, his fiendish rapacity were well known in all circles of Dublin society; but few of those who grew hot beneath the glance of those piercing eyes, or shook with ill-feigned pleasure that skinny yellow hand, with long black nails fit for any vulture's claw, were acquainted with his history.

It was a strange one. Left a foundling upon the door-step of a Jew lawyer, who had no children of his own, Mark's childish beauty struck the fancy of the lawyer's wife, a haughty and imperious woman, and by her influence the unfortunate infant was carried into the house and there nourished and brought up. Displaying signs of early precocity, he soon found favour with the Jew himself, and before he had attained his twelfth

year he was instructed into the mysteries of the office, and rapidly made himself acquainted with all the chicanery and villanies which were practised there. Who so quickly spied a flaw in an indictment as Mark? Who, when a bill had been paid off by the friends of a ruined debauchee, and the money was lying idle, knew where another debauchee yet on ruin's road was to be found, who would give an equal percentage and be safe for squeezing in the end? Who knew every crib and corner in French Street or Clarendon Street, could put his hand on long Phil Henderson whose services were required to aid in a little abduction case down in the south, and who was the only living being who was acquainted with Dennis Freeny's hiding-place, after that ugly bit of still-hunting business, involving the murder of the gauger? Mark, little Mark Lupton, none but he! The oldest practitioner in the Four Courts listened to his opinion with deference; the greatest ruffians, when their "trouble" was on them, hung on his lips, and from his words measured their chances of conviction or escape; the most overbearing, haughtiest dandies of the Castle, wanting time, renewal of their bonds, or fearing exposure, asked for Mr. Lupton, were sure that he would act like a gentleman towards them, and that they might leave "their little affair" in his hands—so clever, so persevering, so subtle was he. Fools all! he loathed the law, the knowledge of which enabled him to counsel Mr. Cognovit, or to suggest to Mr. Replevin; he despised the incarcerated ruffians, not for their crimes, but for their failures and detection; he hated the glittering officers and courteous aides-de-camp, for they inherited and held by right that which he could alone hope to gain by wealth—a position in the world. To be envied, courted, and flattered, to be spoken to with bated breath by the men, and in soft and tender tones by the women, who would now pass him by with a sneer or a stare, to form an integral portion of that small world to which he now did but ministering service, to be of it in station but above it in ability and power,—this was Mark Lupton's passion; a passion which the possession of money would alone aid him in gratifying, and towards the acquisition of money, therefore, he devoted every working of his brain, every hour of his life.

When the old Jew was carried to the graveyard whither his wife had some years preceded him, and Mark Lupton found himself sole heir to the business of his deceased patron, he felt that the time was come for the development of his long-cherished scheme. Quietly and cautiously he set to work: his birth was obscure, his former life morally clouded, his manner cold and forbidding, his tongue bitter and unsparing; but in the bureau bequeathed to him by his predecessor lay broad heavy parchment documents, and thin stamp-indented slips of paper, the proper use of which as weapons of attack should win his entrance into the citadel of society—and he used them well. Dublin society was different in those days to what it now is; faster and yet more loose, many people there are in difficulties now, but every one was then; and so adroitly had the above-named parchment engines of war been worked, that when, for the first time within half

a century, lights blazed and claret flowed and dishes steamed in the old house, Mark Lupton sat at the head of a table round which were ranged eleven of the most brilliant and best-known men among the aristocracy and talent of the city. The first step made, progress was comparatively easy; his whim once known, there were plenty who found it expedient to humour it; the "rich Mr. Lupton" was seen at every ball and rout where fashion reigned supreme, and if not courted, his presence was at least endured. To a mind like Mark Lupton's, always suspicious, always exacting, this was not enough, however; society must do more than admit, it must recognise him. For the consummation of this end he had but one chance—marriage.

The notion ran through him like an electric shock; nearly thirty years of his life had passed away, and such an idea had never before crossed his mind; all his end and aim of being had been concentrated in the attainment of money and position, and no woman had as yet caused his heart one extra palpitation. Business, however, still retained its influence over him, and this was a matter of business, and must be attended to.

Kate Needham was at that time the *belle* of Dublin, rather *petite*, with curling chestnut hair, deep hazel eyes, a little *retroussé* nose, and a hand and foot worth a day's walk to look upon. The daughter of an old Irish baronet, she had lived retired on the family estate in the far West until her twentieth year; business then bringing Sir Miles to the metropolis, she accompanied him, and at once became the rage. Riding in the Phoenix, the cavalcade of her followers was quite a queenly escort; dancing at a ball, strangers stopped to gaze on her as she passed, and vainly longed for an introduction and a waltz; she ruled supreme in fashionable circles, and was as haughty and capricious as such sovereigns usually are. Upon this petted beauty Mark Lupton cast his eyes, and determined upon making her his wife. It was a bold idea; but he was a bold man, and had never yet undertaken any thing without carrying it through boldly and successfully. He obtained an introduction to Miss Needham, met her occasionally at balls, received a sufficiently chilling bow, and was content; it was in the mornings that as the knowing ones say, his "running was made." The business that had brought Sir Miles Needham to town was, simply and truly, insolvency; open house, stables of hunters, a kennel of hounds, crowds of idle and ragged retainers, claret constantly on tap, debts unheeded, interest left to accumulate, had compelled him to mortgage his estate for every farthing he could raise upon it; nor did he pause in his reckless career until he received a letter stating that, unless some arrangement were at once made, immediate foreclosure would be the consequence. The letter was from the holder of the mortgage, and was signed "Mark Lupton."

Roused at last, Sir Miles started for Dublin, and sought an interview with his correspondent. For three successive days did the haughty old baronet, his Milesian blood boiling in him all the time, dance attend-

ance on the money-lender, and after a brief and angry conference return to his club unsatisfied and in alarm. On the fourth (the morning after the ball at which Mark had first seen Kate Needham) he was received at once and with courtesy; under the new impressions raised by the manner of his creditor the horrors of immediate ruin began to dissolve, time could perhaps be given, allowances made, and Sir Miles walked away from Gardner's Place with the full conviction that his hereditary influence was beginning to be felt in Dublin as it was in County Galway, and that the bearing and position of the gentleman had overawed and got the better of the scoundthrelly attorney. He little knew his man; Mark read him like a book, played him as an angler does a fish, giving him line, and humoring his every action, until he had made up his own mind as to what the nature of the "arrangement" was to be; then, in a calm, clear voice, and without the smallest trace of agitation on his impassible features, he told Sir Miles Needham that, unless he secured for him his daughter's hand, within two days the bill advertising the sale of Castle Needham, with its family plate, pictures, library, and furniture, its horses and its hounds, should glare from every dead wall in the city, that his daughter should be left to seek shelter at the hands of strangers or distant kinsfolk, and that he himself should be the inmate of the debtors' jail. The old man was thunderstruck; he raved, stormed, entreated, but all to no purpose,—Mark was inflexible. Shylock himself insisted not more sternly on the fulfilment of his bond. "Miss Needham as my wife, the extinction of your family the only alternative," was his sole reply to prayers, threats, entreaties; and at length, with utter ruin staring him in the face, Sir Miles acceded. What passed between him and his daughter was never known; but he triumphed at last, and Kate Needham became Mark Lupton's wife.

It needs but little foresight or knowledge of the world to predicate the result of such a marriage as this; in such instances the experience on which, from all time, novelists have founded their romances, generally proves correct, and it is but seldom that Happiness deigns to step in to spoil the story. The hard man of business and the petted beauty had not one single thing in common; but the matter of business which had induced Mark Lupton to marry was not concluded until he had had his money's worth,—until he had been seen in society as the husband of the *belle* of Dublin, and been honoured as much for his wife's position as his own wealth. He had overreached himself here, and made a fatal miscalculation; that society which had admitted the *millionaire* and shrugged its shoulders to its friends behind his back, saying, "For his money, my good friend, that is all," put on quite a different air when he assumed to be "of them," hated him for his success in carrying off one of their most attractive members, and as openly as they dared sneered at his presumption. This behaviour was countenanced by Mrs. Lupton; to lower and degrade her husband in every possible way was her constant study, and those who persevered in this cause won her instant favour.

Half mad with mortification at his wife's conduct, and the indignities put upon him, Mark Lupton retired from that world for which he had once so longed, and again devoted all his energies to business. Night after night, when Mrs. Lupton was away at balls and revels, Mark was poring over the old books and the old papers; creditors found him harder than ever, his own clerks were astonished at his grinding tyranny, money was more than ever necessary to him (for his wife's expenses were enormous, and he seldom denied her any thing, as he still had a pleasure in hearing of her triumphs), and money was wrung from every one in the most pitiless manner. At length, a year after his marriage, a son was born to the miser, and Mrs. Lupton died in giving birth to her boy. A few weeks before, and her death would have been a heavy blow to her husband; but he had now entirely given up all care for society, and he found thorough consolation in the birth of the child. In him Mark Lupton purposed to live again; the boy should never leave his side, should be initiated by him into all the mysteries of his practice, and should inherit that spirit of revenge upon the world which formed so dominant a portion of his father's character. As the child grew up, as his intellect began to expand and to show him precocious and sharp beyond his years, the father's spirit brightened within him, and he would rub his hands in glee over the dazzling success of his project. It was a strange sight to see a little child of some seven or eight years old seated on the worn and frayed carpet in his father's study, building up the huge ledgers into castles, sitting astride the fire-proof safes, and rattling the cash-boxes until their contents rang again, while the father sat by with a smile on his thin face, allowing himself to be beguiled even from his most important business by the play and prattle of the boy.

But, as time passed on and the boy grew up to manhood, a deep shadow fell again across Mark Lupton's life,—a shadow henceforth never to be removed. Continual intercourse with the child had done much to humanise the blunted feelings and hardened heart of the usurer; he had begun to feel that something else besides money and position was to be lived for, had begun to hope that a brighter purpose might illumine the concluding years of his own life, that a happier end than he had ever premised was in store for him, and had determined that his old scheme of bringing up the boy to follow in his own path, to inherit his own feelings and views, should be abandoned, and that all that education and liberality could do for him should be done. With this view he made up his mind to part with the lad for a time, and send him to Eton. Thither young Gordon Lupton went, there he remained, and hence came assurances of his future fate. Debts incurred, bonds broken, masters set at defiance,—these were the half-yearly reports which the old father received, and the manners of his son, personally studied by him, went far to corroborate the category. When the boy came home for his holidays, he showed himself headstrong, obstinate, and tyrannical; he sneered at his father's profession, at his avarice, his loneliness, his isolation; every word

he spoke found its way between the joints of the old man's harness, and galled him to the quick. And yet there was something in the lad's air and bearing, in every speech and action, which brought balm commingled with its wound. Mark's old hopes were swept away certainly; the boy would not take to the business, would not be thrifty, cautious, money-making, as the father's early hopes had led him to believe, nor would he be the true, earnest, affectionate, docile child, such as the old man's later thoughts had pictured to himself; but he would be a fine, dashing, lively youth, one who would take rank in a higher sphere, and would there be respected for his own noble qualities, backed by all that power which money holds at its command. It was a falling-off from both the early dreams; but still it was something, and the old man thought that when he was laid at rest his life of grinding chicanery would be forgotten, and the inheritor of the name of Lupton would hold his own with the bravest of the land.

But a poor ambition in itself, and yet one not destined to be realised! Young Lupton's career at Eton was brought to a premature close by the discovery of some gambling transaction in which he had been engaged, and his father was requested to remove him from the school. The lad, now growing into a young man, returned to the parental roof hardened and immovable, and when his father bitterly upbraided him with his sins, he, instead of quailing and promising amendment, turned round with brazened front and fixed eye, and demanded what was to be expected of one who had been nurtured in the very hotbed of lax morals and dishonesty. The grand old Hebrew precept had been fulfilled, and Mark Lupton, doubly sensitive now that brighter and better hopes had been gradually growing within him, cowered beneath the unabashed audacity of that child in whose life he had hoped to find solace and repose.

When the question of a profession arose, Gordon Lupton showed the same obstinacy and determination to follow his own course. He decided for the army, and nothing else would he listen to; in vain his father urged upon him his desire that his son should follow the law, wherein his own career had been so successful, and wherein his son would inherit his position; the young man refused passionately, and declared that in a military life alone there could be found happiness, and that he would embrace no other. A commission was accordingly obtained for him in a cavalry regiment then stationed in the south of Ireland, and thither he repaired.

The army is scarcely the best profession for a young man of Gordon Lupton's inclinations, and it will not be very difficult to imagine his military career. All the vices which he had first given evidence of at Eton now again broke forth; his passions were stronger, and he had more power of gratifying them; and he lived so hard and so recklessly, that even his brother-officers, who were tolerably used to dissipation, looked on him with wonder. Play was his great delight; he gambled from morning till night; he would play for any thing from sovereigns to hundreds, and the

luck was invariably against him. His ready money was soon gone; but his parentage was well known, and there were plenty of sharks hanging round the barracks willing to "do the paper" of old Lupton's son, their willingness being increased by a kind of ludicrous satisfaction in thus preying on the great master of their craft. But their mirth was of short duration; when the bills fell due Gordon Lupton was unable to meet them, and on their being sent to his father the old man refused in the most positive manner to advance one shilling. In vain did Mr. O'Lavey howl and weep, in vain did Mr. McMoshesh storm and swear—Mark Lupton was totally unmoved; only once his features relaxed, when they threatened him with law, and then he burst into a sardonic chuckle, as he said, "Well! I know something of *that*, too!"

It was all in vain, and Mr. O'Lavey returned to Galway with but one hope left—that of working upon Gordon Lupton's fears. Accordingly, immediately on his arrival he went to the barracks and told the cornet of the ill-success of his mission, and of the hopelessness of appealing to his father; concluding by saying, that if the money were not paid at once, instant arrest should ensue. Young Lupton asked for time, for renewal; but the Jew would not hear of the first, and could only consent to the latter on one condition,—that the new bill should be endorsed by Major Annesley, who, as the money-lender averred, was the only solvent man in the regiment. The cornet urged that Major Annesley was away on leave in England, and proffered various other names as security; but Mr. O'Lavey would hear of no one but the major, and hinted that the resources of the Post-Office were fully equal to effecting a communication between the two officers. Gordon Lupton felt the sneer, and passed an hour after the Jew's departure in an agony of terror: he knew that Annesley would refuse his acceptance; without that acceptance he was certain of imprisonment and disgrace. What if —? a sudden thought flashed through his mind, and left his cheek pale and his teeth clenched: three months! in that time his father might relent—might even die; the luck of the table might turn—a thousand chances might happen! On the fourth day after their interview Gordon Lupton enclosed to Mr. O'Lavey a new bill drawn by himself and accepted "Barton Annesley."

Three months elapsed, and old Mark Lupton, now shrunken, wizened, and decrepit, was hanging over his desk, looking through his papers, as was his wont, when his clerk told him a stranger was in the outer office inquiring for him. He would not give his name, the clerk said; but old Mark had had too many queer clients in his life to be surprised at this, and he ordered the man to be admitted. He raised his eyes as the man entered, and saw Mr. O'Lavey.

"One minute, my dear sir," said this gentleman, raising his hand deprecatingly, as he saw Mark about to speak; "I won't detain you one minute. You didn't expect me, and you're not pleased to see me! You think I'm come about your son's business—well, so I am."

"Not a shilling from me," broke out the old man; "not a shilling to save him from ——"

"From what?" said Mr. O'Lavey, in a bantering tone—"you weren't going to say from the gallows? why, what a re-markably prescient old gentleman you must be."

"Your business, sir; my time is valuable!"

"Ah, so is mine! are we quite alone? doors shut, no clerk's ears at the keyholes? Well, sir, last time I was here you refused to take up a bill of your son's for a large amount."

"I did—I still refuse!"

"You needn't trouble yourself. I renewed it. Renewed it on one condition,—that it should bear the acceptance of Major Annesley, a man of wealth and honour in your son's regiment. I received it, bearing that acceptance."

"Be brief, sir, if you please," croaked Mark; "my time—"

"Your time is coming, old gentleman!" snarled the Jew; "the bill is due, and the acceptance is a forgery!"

"What?" shrieked the old man, rising from his chair.

"A forgery, committed by your son!" Mark's head sunk upon his breast. "Ah, you're knocked over, old gentleman, likely enough; but just look here; in three days I call here again, with the forged document. If you like to buy it of me, it will cost you two thousand pounds, if you don't, you know the course I shall take."

As Mr. O'Lavey passed through the outer office, he said to the clerks, "I'd advise you to look after your old governor,—he don't seem quite right."

That night Mark Lupton had a paralytic stroke, and lost the power of speech and of motion.

Gordon Lupton was summoned at once to Dublin, and as he descended from the coach found Mr. O'Lavey by his side, who rapidly explained to him his father's state, but informed him the doctors were of opinion that the old man might survive for many months in his present condition. The Jew then took leave of him, telling him he would call upon him in the evening. Under other circumstances, the piteous spectacle which his father presented might have softened the young man's heart; but vice had so steeled him, that he merely regarded the old man as an encumbrance which he was anxious to be rid of. Nor did his evening's conversation with Mr. O'Lavey tend to allay this feeling, for that worthy man, dropping all disguise, told Gordon that he was fully cognisant of his crime, that he had come to Dublin for the purpose of extracting the money from his father, but that as that was now impossible, he looked to the young man alone for payment, and unless that payment was made within twenty-four hours, he should represent the entire matter to the magistrates.

"Don't say I haven't held to you to the last, Mister Gordon,"

said O'Lavey; "but business is business. Oh, if your poor father could only be summoned now, it would be a release to himself and a great benefit to his next of kin!"

"A release to himself and a benefit to his next of kin!" These words rang in Gordon Lupton's ears as he sat brooding over the lonely fireplace, vainly racking his brain for some expedient to soften O'Lavey's determination. The streets were deserted, the rain plashed drearily against the windows, and its dripping from the ledges and gutters was the only sound heard throughout the house. The old servant whom Mark Lupton had retained had long since retired to bed, and the old man must be alone—alone, with senses numbed and faculties paralysed. O'Lavey's vengeance would not fail; within twenty-four hours the story would be known, and he would be the inmate of a gaol. On the one hand, discovery, disgrace, and a felon's fate; on the other, riches, position, power.

A cold sweat broke over Gordon Lupton's pallid face as he contemplated these chances; he shrank back into his chair, and, glaring at the half dying embers, gnawed his fingers until the blood started from them. Stealthily glancing round the room, his eye fell upon a portrait of his mother, taken in the days of her imperial beauty, when all Dublin was at her feet; he recollected her in that guise, she had been the one bright angel of his life; and as he looked at it, the portrait seemed to stand out from the canvas, and the eyes looked down upon him with a peculiar expression of haughty triumph. "See," they seemed to say, "how the world is ruled!—beauty, power, money, are mine." There was a laughing devil in that face, the expression of which the artist had softened, but could not subdue. There was no tenderness in her look, no pitying, loving, motherly glance; all spoke of the world and its requirements; and the young man turned from it hardened in heart, and half disposed towards his mind's worst promptings. "If your poor father could but be summoned now!" O'Lavey's last words—paralytic, speechless, dead to all outward sense and feeling, and yet sufficiently alive to remain master of his wealth, that wealth the possession of which would save his son from ignominy and the gaol. Gordon Lupton pressed his hot dry hands to his burning forehead, took from an old sideboard a bottle of brandy, filled a tumbler more than half-full, and drank it off; then, seizing a lamp, he opened the door, and proceeded stealthily up the stairs. On the first-floor some alterations were apparently going on; the stairs were bespattered with lime and mortar, and some large nails and a hammer were lying by what had been in Mrs. Lupton's time the drawing-room-door. Gordon looked at these latter for an instant; then picking them up, and concealing them beneath his coat, he proceeded on his way.

The rushlight, flickering through its old many-holed shade, cast a dim and grotesque shadow over the heavy old-fashioned room, where, on a bed hung with faded tapestry, the old man lay. As Gordon stealthily opened the door, his father turned restlessly, and uttered a faint, inarti-

culate sound; the next moment his son was at his side—a grasp at his neck, a blow in his ear, and Mark Lupton was a dead man!

Dead! cold, stone-dead! had been dead for hours, the doctor said, when he visited the house the next morning, and, under young Mr. Gordon's guidance, was taken up to the room. "Said he'd never get over this attack—didn't I, nurse?" said the medico, after the most cursory examination, merely touching the dead man's pulse. "Died hard too,—in a return of the fit, evidently,—from the clenched hands and contracted facial muscles; look, Mr. Gordon!" But Mr. Gordon, evidently overcome, would not look, and hurried the doctor from the room. Young Mr. Gordon was stupefied with grief; he would see no one—not even Mr. O'Lavey, who called that morning and left his compliments, with the expression of his determination ever after to believe in the mysterious decrees of Providence. Young Mr. Gordon sat by himself in the down-stairs room—not in his late father's study, but in a back-room adjoining—and consumed vast quantities of brandy. He declined to attend to business in any way, and was urgent on only one point—that the funeral should be speedy and magnificent.

It was magnificent. There was only one coach, for there were only two mourners, the son and his friend Mr. O'Lavey; the doctor had offered to come, but Mr. Gordon dispensed with his attendance; but all that feathers and velvet and troops of horses could do, was done. As they sat together in the back-room, waiting to start, Mr. O'Lavey noticed—not with astonishment, but with secret devilish satisfaction—that Gordon Lupton buried his head in his hands and stuffed his fingers in his ears when the dull, horrible sound of the men descending with the coffin was heard; but he was quite recovered when they told him all was ready, and walked—with a death-pale face, indeed, but with tolerably steady step—to the coach, whither he was followed by his obsequious friend.

The head undertaker—whose ponderous hat-gear was sadly ruffled by the wind, which blew in strong gusts, and the rain, which fell in torrents—gave the signal that the procession should start, and Gordon Lupton flung himself back in the coach, and covered his face with his handkerchief. A minute or two passed, and, as the carriage did not move, Mr. O'Lavey, with natural curiosity, projected his head from the window, and demanded of the crowd what was the matter.

"'Tis the horses, yer honner," said a ragged man standing on the kerb-stone.

"Sorra a fut will the bastes move!" said another.

"Smail blame to 'em either," croaked an old woman; "'t isn't I would be dthraggin' ould Mark Lupton to the grave! What's the use of puttin' his body there, when he sold his sowl to the divell long ago?"

"Whisht, Biddy! here's the captain comin' out." And the crowd

moved back as Gordon Lupton leant from the carriage-window and called to the undertaker.

"I'm exceedingly sorry, sir," said that functionary, "but it's perfectly true. I cannot conceive what ails the horses; never knew them behave in such a way before; but nothing will induce them to move."

"What—what's to be done?" asked Lupton, his face deadly pale, and his teeth chattering as he spoke.

"Look here, my friend," interrupted Mr. O'Lavey, putting his hands on Lupton's shoulder, and whispering in his ear. "Let us get quit of this business as quickly as possible. You know the feeling of an Irish crowd about such matters as these, and if any hitch occurs—eh? Here," to the undertaker, "it is but a short distance to the grave; let half a dozen of your strongest men carry the coffin there; we will follow."

But it was by no means an easy task to get together these men. The crowd had been muttering among themselves, and repeating all the old superstitions ever circulated about Mark Lupton; and even the undertaker's assistants did not seem to relish the new duty imposed upon them. At length, however, the requisite number was selected; the door of the hearse was opened, and the coffin brought out. Just as the men had got it on their shoulders, a gust of wind of extra violence howled down the street, catching up the pall, and whirling it round the heads of the two foremost bearers. Terrified beyond measure, these men, whose superstitious fears had already been roused to the highest pitch, made a vain effort to free themselves, and in so doing one of them lost his balance, and dragged his companion with him to the ground. The other men behind tried vainly to save themselves from a similar fate; but the equilibrium of their burden was lost, and the coffin was dashed heavily to the pavement and shattered in its fall. A wail of horror burst from the crowd, mingled with a piercing shriek from Gordon Lupton, who fell down, foaming at the mouth, in an epileptic fit. He never spoke again, and died that evening.

* * * * *

They buried him by the old man's side; and Mr. O'Lavey kept his counsel so well that the events herein narrated were not known until the death of that worthy usurer. Shortly afterwards they received curious confirmation; an improvement was about to be made in the graveyard where the bodies of the Luptons lay. In moving the coffin of the old man it again came to pieces (the original fracture had only been roughly repaired), and the skeleton was exposed to view. The sexton, who had been a child when Mark Lupton died, and on whose childish fancy the narration of the circumstance had made a great impression, took up the skull to examine it; when, from the orifice where the ear had been, there dropped a long pointed nail, rusted with blood.

A Nation of Marksmen.

AT a meeting of a proposed volunteer rifle corps, a short time since, the chairman, after the usual explanation of the causes which have led to the present volunteer movement among us, concluded by informing his hearers that its object was, "that the rifle may become in every Englishman's hand what the longbow was in the hands of his ancestors,—at once the pastime of his leisure and the defence of his home and country."

As this announcement was received with enthusiastic cheering, it was evident that the speaker and those he addressed were unanimous on this point, and it may therefore be interesting to inquire how far the volunteer movement in its present organisation is calculated to effect such a result.

The volunteer movement is of course a military one, and the rules and regulations for rifle practice are therefore wisely modelled upon the musketry instructions of the army—the object of which is, first to make good soldiers, and next to make them good shots; but however successful we may be in thus training our volunteers, it is evident that we have but advanced a step towards the establishment of rifle-shooting as a general pastime in England. It is true that this step is a most important one, and from the enthusiasm with which it has been welcomed we can hardly doubt that it is the beginning of a much deeper and wider movement. We hear on all hands that the volunteer organisation has increased the reputation and influence of England, and we are all beginning to feel a sense of security, very different from the alternations of alarm and apathy of a few years back. This cannot arise wholly from the mere fact that we have added so many thousands of men, more or less drilled, to the number of our forces. The true reason is, that every volunteer we now have represents ten who would be forthcoming at the first appearance of danger, and fifty who are beginning to take an interest in the subject, which, rightly directed, may prove of infinite service. But for this we require greater opportunities and facilities for practice, so that the shooting ground may become a place where Englishmen can meet and join in friendly rivalry, whether volunteers or civilians. If this can be effected, we may then claim to be a nation of riflemen, like the Swiss and Americans, or a nation of marksmen, like our ancestors the bowmen of 1361.

There is little doubt that the present movement will lead to this result if it be allowed to do so, but we have some fear that there still remains on the part of those in authority a trace of the old reluctance to encourage the use of arms among the people. Those who remember the Victoria Rifles in 1853 could tell of the difficulties encountered in the endeavour to obtain the recognition of Government; and the ghost of the Metropolitan Rifle Association, smothered by authority in 1852, rises to hint that things were not always so pleasant as they are now. Ungenerous as it may

seem, after the frank and hearty encouragement of late years, we doubt if the authorities would even now look with favour on a rifle-club the members of which did not commence proceedings by taking the oath of allegiance, and reporting themselves at the War Office. If such guarantees are considered necessary, there can be no objection to them; but without doubt these associations would prove a valuable auxiliary to the volunteer service, by attracting many who cannot spare the time for attending the long routine of drill, or to whom the expense of uniform and accoutrements is an obstacle, but who would nevertheless willingly take an interest in, and become proficient in, rifle-shooting, and who, having thus learnt beforehand the most essential and difficult part of a soldier's duties, would form a valuable reserve in case of actual necessity.

In considering the vastly increased range and accuracy of the modern improvements in rifles, we frequently speak as though the practice of rifle-shooting had been entirely unknown in England up to the present time, and are apt to overlook the fact that our grandfathers the volunteers of 1805 had some skill in the use of the arms of precision of their day, and prided themselves upon it. Shooting-matches between the different corps were numerous and exciting. One match, in 1805, had six corps engaged in it, and lasted ten days. The Duke of Cumberland's Sharp-Shooters (now known as the Victoria Rifles) were considered the most expert marksmen among the volunteers. In 1810 the Nottinghamshire Riflemen challenged all England. The challenge was accepted by the Honourable Artillery Company and the Duke of Cumberland's Sharp-Shooters, who proved the victors. On one occasion, in Hyde Park, Major Barber, of this regiment, *held the target* for twelve of the best shots in the corps while they fired at it, at the distance of 150 yards—then considered a very long range. We should hardly advise any commandant of the present day to repeat this experiment.

But the habit of shooting-matches died out with the extinction of the former volunteer movement; and we are inclined to think for the very reason that the organisation of these societies being purely military, the bulk of the people took no interest in them. Only a few years later, and it became fashionable for the wits of the day to sneer at the "shopkeepers who left their business to study the profession of arms." *Absit omen!*

If we go back still further, we find that, "in days long ago, when our fathers were armed with the brown bill and bow," the practice of archery was enjoined by legislative enactments, of which it is said there are nearly sixty relating to the use of the bow between the time of Henry II. and Henry VIII. In the reign of Edward III. proclamation was made that all persons should practise archery on the holidays and Sundays during the hours not occupied by divine service. Every person having an annual income of more than one hundred pence was obliged to furnish himself with a serviceable bow and arrows, and every village was furnished with pricks, butts, and rovers for the competition of the people. The Act 33 Hen. VIII. c. 9, called "An Acte for Mayntenance of Artyllarie, and

debarring of Unlawful Games," ordains that "noe p'son above the saide age of xxiij yeres shall shoote at any marke of a leaven score yards or under with any prickshafte or flight under the peyne to forfeit for everie shoote vjs viijd." It is curious to notice, that while 150 yards is considered in 1805 as a long range for the rifle, in 1543 220 yards is fixed as the minimum distance to be allowed for the bow. In fact it may be said, that up to the beginning of the present century "those vile guns" were far inferior in range and accuracy to the English longbow. It was only the smoke caused by the "villainous saltpetre" which rendered the skill of the archer useless, and caused the abandonment of his weapon in warfare.

But with the improvement of the new weapon the skill of the user becomes again a matter of the first importance; and we are told, in *The Book of Musketry Instruction for the Army*, page 10, that

"The rifle is placed in the soldier's hands for the destruction of his enemy; his own safety depends upon his efficient use of it: it cannot, therefore, be too strongly inculcated, that every man who has no defect in his eyes may be made a good shot, and that no degree of perfection he may have attained in the other parts of his drill can upon service remedy any want of proficiency in this; in fact, all his other instructions in marching and manœuvring can do no more than place him in the best possible situation for using his weapon with effect. A soldier who cannot shoot is useless, and an encumbrance to the battalion."

With regard to the time required to obtain the necessary proficiency, Colonel Wilford, of the School of Musketry at Hythe, says:

"If by a soldier is meant a man in red, who can march without treading down the shoe-heels of one in front, well and good; but if you mean to convey the idea of one skilled in the use of the rifle, perhaps three years would be nearer the mark."

J. R. Chapman, an American author, writing in 1848, says:

"An army of 50,000 men landed upon the Atlantic coast, intending to remain or penetrate into the interior, would inevitably be destroyed or captured in three months, and this would be effected principally with the rifle. A man accustomed to carry a rifle with as much care as an Old Countryman does a watch—educated, perhaps born, in the woods, accustomed to hang his life upon the certainty of a sure shot—is a tremendous overmatch for another, who knows his weapon only on drill, never saw a clump of trees larger than those in Hyde Park, and who, as a marksman, is likely to hit neither the tree nor the man behind it."

In short, every writer on the subject admits that the first thing to be learnt is the use of the weapon, and that all practice in drill and marching is but a secondary consideration. But how stands the case with our volunteers? A few months since they were described by a French writer as "assiduously practising every branch of their new profession, *except* the dangerous and expensive amusement of rifle-shooting." And the satire, such as it is, is nearly as applicable at the present time. Very few of the metropolitan rifle corps have any practice-grounds at all, and most of those which do exist are so situated that it takes an hour's journey to

reach them. How many days in the year can a member of one of the artisan corps, for example, be expected to lose half a day's work to go to rifle-practice, without some stronger inducement than at present exists?

The author of a work lately published, *A Treatise on the Loop-Formation for Rifle Volunteers*, employs seventy-five pages to prove that the only two things a rifleman ought to learn are, first, to shoot; and secondly, to run away! Lest we should be suspected of misquotation, we give the passage entire, from p. 35 :

"The whole are to understand that the single and simple principle of their mode of fighting is to be this, viz. that they are never individually, or collectively, to *make any stand*; never to engage in any reciprocating fire with the enemy *in the nature of a skirmish*; never to defend any position against an approaching attack of the enemy; always to recede as each man, at his own discretion, may think expedient from one point to another, without any orders; that the point of honour for each man is to bewilder, deceive, and *avoid* the enemy. Always to fire when he thinks himself sure of hitting an enemy, if he can do so at little or no risk to himself; never to fire unless he believes himself to have true aim at one; and throughout to consider himself bound, in honour to his neighbours and to his cause, never to expose himself to any risk that he can possibly avoid in performing these simple duties."

For the means by which this simple operation is made to confound and utterly exterminate an invading enemy, we must refer our readers to the work itself, which, it is but fair to say, demands a fuller and more careful consideration than this brief notice. In fact in the *Times* of December 13th there is a letter from Taranaki, in New Zealand, which, after giving an account of how the Maoris, by their pursuance of somewhat similar tactics, have managed, in one of the late skirmishes, to inflict upon our forces a loss of ten per cent of the numbers engaged, concludes by stating that "the military practice of drawing up men in full view of the enemy, and standing straight up in order like so many ninapins,—or, as the Maoris express it, 'all same as one target,'—is being gradually abandoned." Surely this is a curious commentary on the value of the company and battalion drill which we are taking such pains to teach our volunteers.

At all events, it seems to be admitted that marksmanship is to be the test of efficiency, and therefore actual practice in shooting is of the first importance. To insure this, the practice-grounds must be brought near to the residence of the volunteers, so that even a spare half-hour may be thus employed. This appears, at first sight, to offer some difficulty in the neighbourhood of large towns, where our volunteers are most numerous, but practically there is no difficulty except the space required, if we adopt the arrangement of screens and banks to intercept stray bullets and ricochet,—in fact, shooting-galleries,—where open ranges are unsafe or objectionable. This plan is in general use in Switzerland, and though it is open to the objection that the screens form in some measure a guide to the eye in aiming, it is evident that we are compelled to some arrange-

ment of this kind if we are to have practice-grounds at all in such localities. In the twenty-fourth number of *Once a Week* there is a description and sketch of a somewhat similar screen, by Mr. S. R. Lock, of Regent Street, which in a great measure obviates this objection, and also shows how they may be rendered, by artistic treatment, an ornament instead of a disfigurement to the practice-grounds. There is vacant space sufficient in Hyde Park, as well as in the Regent's, Battersea, and Victoria Parks, for a 400-yards practice-ground if such precautions were adopted; and four such ranges would supply all London with facilities for rifle-practice.

The two great requisites for a rifleman are steadiness and precision; and that these may be acquired by practice at short ranges is proved by the success of the Swiss at Wimbledon, who gained thirteen of the all-comers' prizes, at distances varying from 200 to 900 yards, though hardly one of them had ever fired before in an open range, or at a greater distance than 240 yards.

The Enfield rifle, we are told by one authority,* is the best arm that was ever given to a soldier in any country. The author of the *Loop Formation*, before quoted, informs us that "the thing called the Enfield rifle" is somewhat less bad than the first one chosen (the Minié), but is still very bad indeed. The truth, as usual, lies between these two extremes; but the first assertion is by far the most correct. The Enfield is surpassed by the Swiss in accuracy at all ranges up to 700 yards, and by the new Austrian rifle (to judge from the published accounts) at all distances; but in the materials and workmanship it is far superior to any other military weapon. In comparison with the military rifle proposed by Mr. Whitworth, it has the advantage of greater lightness, and the cartridge is not so liable to damage in transport, or from damp. In both the Swiss and Austrian weapons, the operation of loading is slower and more difficult. As regards accuracy, the Swiss has twice, and the Whitworth three times, the accuracy of the Enfield at 500 yards.

The principal defect of the Enfield is the shape of the stock, which is curiously arranged so as to be suitable for no man living. The extreme bend or crook—that is, the distance of the butt measured from the straight line which would be produced by prolonging the top surface of the barrel—is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, which would be suitable for a very short man; but the length of the same stock is suited to a man of medium height; so that a short man can hardly reach the trigger with his finger when in the regulation position, and a tall man has to bring his nose or cheek-bone into unpleasant contact with the stock before he can look along the barrel at all. This shape of stock is copied from the old "Brown Bess" musket, and the reason, or rather the explanation, given for its being retained was thus stated by a late government inspector of small arms: "It would be impossible to fit every man with a gun-stock to suit his shoulder; and, with sufficient practice, a man may learn to shoot with a

* *Observations on Muskets, Rifles, and Projectiles*, by Henry Wilkinson.

barrel tied on to a mop-stick." To appreciate the value of this reasoning, it is only necessary to suppose the same principle carried out in the hats or shoes of our soldiers. If every man's foot, for instance, were placed in a regulation pair of shoes, twelve inches long by two inches broad, he would be fitted in much the same manner as he is at present with his rifle-stock.

Another fault is the position of the back, or elevating sight, upon the barrel. In aiming at 500 yards, it is eleven inches from the eye. If any one will place the page he is reading at this distance from his eye, and look over it at a more distant object, he will probably see a curious confusion in the outline of the sheet, which appears blurred, and not so sharp and clear as it did at a longer distance. The focal length of the eye, for an ordinary sight, is from twelve to thirteen inches, and if any object is placed within this distance, its outline becomes indistinct and confused, and it is, of course, impossible to see it clearly whilst aiming. If the stock of these rifles were made half an inch more crooked, and the sight were placed two inches further from the eye, nine men out of ten would make better practice with them than they can now do.

We owe, perhaps, an apology to the volunteers, who, we may assume, are the only readers who will have courage to wade through the dry details of this portion of our subject, for proceeding to explain the principles of counting the hits upon the Hythe system, with which, no doubt, they are well acquainted. Nevertheless, for the sake of the general reader who may have incautiously ventured thus far, we will state them as briefly as possible.

In the third class, at all distances up to 300 yards, the bull's-eye, 8 inches in diameter, counts 3 points; the centre, 24 inches in diameter, counts 2 points; and any other part of the target, 4 by 6 feet, counts one point.

After 300 yards bull's-eyes are not counted; the centre, 2 feet in diameter, counts, as before, 2 points; and any other part of the target, 6 by 8 feet, counts one point.

After 600 yards the centre, 3 feet, counts 2 points; but the target is increased to 6 by 12 feet, and any part of it counts one point if hit.

This plan of counting is based upon the known performance of the Enfield rifle. Thus, after 300 yards bull's-eyes are not counted, because, though the 8-inch circle may be touched at such distances, it is impossible to say if the hit is owing to the skill of the marksman or to accident. In fact, the rifle cannot be trusted to hit within eight inches at 400 yards. For a military weapon this is not considered a defect, since whether an enemy be hit in the chin or the forehead will probably make no difference to him. But as rifles exist (*viz.* the Whitworth, Lancaster, and other small bores) which will put all their shots into a two-foot circle at 400 yards, it is much to be wished that, when these are used, some system of counting should be adopted which would allow a greater accuracy of measurement, since with such a weapon a good and bad shot may "tie"

each other for a considerable time, though one may hit the centre and the other the edge of the bull's-eye every shot.

It will be noticed, that though the width of the targets is increased for the long distances, the same height (six feet) is always retained. This is assumed to be the height of an infantry soldier; and two feet being taken as the width of a man standing upright, the third class target, therefore, represents the space occupied by two men; the second class, that of four; and the first class, that of six men standing in line. The Hythe average of shooting for 900 yards is 0.75 points; that is, we may say, a marksman is expected to hit the target once in five shots at that distance. This may seem very poor shooting to those who take their notions of rifle-practice from the extraordinary stories that have been circulated. Our American cousins, who have certainly in one respect far surpassed the traditional attribute of the long-bow, inform us that when a man "down east" goes out squirrel-shooting, he is very careful to hit the animal so that the bullet enters at one eye and goes out at the other, as the skin would be worthless if it had a bullet-hole in it! Some of the newspaper articles of a year or two back spoke confidently of "picking off a man at a mile" as a very possible feat. Unfortunately it is by no means easy (except on paper) to hit an object the size of six men at half a mile, as the slightest movement will displace the front sight, the whole width of the target. For this reason a very long aim is rarely a successful one; the act of restraining the breath, if long continued, produces an involuntary movement of the muscles of the arm and chest, and when this begins all steadiness is gone.

One of the most extraordinary instances of precision in the present day, is that of an officer of the Grenadier Guards, who has frequently hit a common walking-stick at the distance of 150 yards, and once at the distance of 240 yards. This excels the shooting of "the good yeoman Locksley, called Cleave-the-Wand," in *Ivanhoe*, though it certainly does not approach that recorded in the pages of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, whose *Legend of the Rhine*, however, is considered to be of doubtful authenticity.

To the National Rifle Association we owe, in a great degree, the general interest now taken in rifle-shooting in England. The meeting of last year at Wimbledon was a surprise to all; and the excellence of the general arrangements deserves every acknowledgment. The visitors on the first and second days certainly did not know exactly what to do with themselves; but the experiment of the "Aunt Sally" targets provided exactly what was needed to continue the interest, and those who came to stare remained to shoot. If, profiting by this experience, they provide a greater number of open targets for the visitors at the next national meeting, there is no doubt that they will be thronged. We hear rumours also of a visit from one of the American militia regiments; and as the bore of the new American musket is almost exactly the same as that of the Enfield, the competitors will start on equal conditions. The Swiss will no doubt pay us another visit, and may prove as formidable at the long ranges as they did last year at the

shorter distances. We shall probably have some visitors from France and Belgium if peace continue, and altogether we are promised a most exciting competition. Where nerve and skill are the qualities required, we need not fear but Englishmen will always hold a foremost place; and if sufficient facilities are afforded for rifle-practice, especially in the neighbourhood of London and other large towns, we may become in a few years a nation of marksmen like our ancestors, described by Froissart :

“ Vites et légers de traire tous ensemble, et si épaissement, que nul ne osoit ni pouvoit se mettre en leur trait.”



Colonel Bowie and his Knife.

I HAD never had the pleasure of being personally introduced in America to that very great man Colonel Bowie. He was, I believe, a "first-class screamer," as they say in the Southern States; and these States owe a large debt of gratitude to that truly ingenious, truly original inventor, to that Columbus of cutlery, to that facilitator of justifiable homicide. I had always heard the Colonel was what the rowdies or unemployed chivalry of Louisiana and Missouri beautifully denominated, with all the fervour of southern poetry, "a riglar ripper;" but I never thoroughly understood the great debt the human species owed the dead hero, till I had scientifically discussed the invention by which he acquired his immortality in a cutler's shop, or a "store," as the Americans call it, in the city of Richmond in the State of Virginia.

I had spent some days in that pleasant city, so redolent of tobacco, whose brown and spear-shaped leaves tapestry, indeed, every wall and every roof. I had been to the agricultural show-fair, and stared my fill at "bear-baiting, the performing mice from Japan, and the smallest man in the world from Madagascar." I had beheld with, I trust, sufficient admiration the large bulbous sweet potatoes, the rosy "Buffum" apples, the brandy peaches, and the gigantic orange globes of pumpkins.

Tired of these not unsatiating pleasures, and desirous to possess myself of that "young man's best companion" in a wild country, a good bowie-knife, I that day entered about noon the shop of Hiram Peabody, in the High Street of the Virginia City.

I had long since found that nearly every one I met carried, or "toted," as they phrase it, either a bowie-knife or a "five-shooter." I had been assured that in case of a dispute, however trifling (say about the slave question, or the then pending Presidential election), if I travelled without arms, I should be certainly shot down before I could strike a blow. Though having myself a strong opinion that the practice of carrying arms, unless in the time of immediate peril, is unwise in the traveller, as provoking him to rather seek than avoid quarrels, I gave way at last to the repeated urgings of prudence, and, entering Peabody's shop, asked to look at some of his best bowie-knives.

"Take a seat, mister," said Hiram blandly, as if he was going to sell me only cosmetics and soft soap; "and I'll look out the sort of bowie I think you would like to 'tote.' Hannibal, get down that A4 case from the third shelf."

Hannibal, rising from a dime novel which the *Syracuse Daily Avalanche* insufficiently concealed, rose, and brought me the case of weapons.

Imagine a rather short and broad carving-knife, with a buckhorn

handle and a dagger-hilt of the ordinary cross form. But, reshaping it partly on the forge of your fancy, do not leave it a thin polished slip of steel so high tempered and brittle that it would snap like glass if you prized open with it the lid of a jewel-box, or dabbled it with an oblique stab into the soft deal of a kitchen-dresser; no, but rather weld two or three such knives together until you have a backbone to it massive as that of a woodman's bill-hook; so that, if camping out in the woods, you could lop in two with it at a stroke the aromatic boughs of the red cypress, the knotted shafts of swamp-canes, or cleave in two like carrots young hickory or maple saplings thick as the wrist of your boy at Eton.

The first weapon Hiram handed to me was double-edged towards the point, which did not resemble that of a spear-head, but rather that of a Turkish scimitar, or the crusader's falchion, the type of which our armourers probably derived from the East. It was a weapon to cleave a bear's head with, to stab a dying panther still dangerous with his claws, to slit open an alligator, or with which to break up a dead deer as he lay crimsoning the dun leaves of a Carolina pine-wood. In weight it was heavier than the heaviest Oriental handjar or poniard, and in its whole character it strongly reminded me of the short heavy Roman gladium with which Cæsar's soldiers probably fought in Gaul and Spain.

I objected that it was too heavy, upon which Hiram said solemnly:

"No, mister; I guess it is a mere toothpick to the bowie a Missouri gentleman, who was in here yesterday to buy a revolver, 'toted.'"

"You must have substance in these articles," struck in the quick-eyed journal-loving Hannibal, "or what use are they in a fuss? Yes, sir, when your turn comes to sail in—"

A negro, whose white teeth when he grinned looked as if his mouth was full of rice, came, deprecatingly, and looked over our shoulders at Colonel Bowie's invention.

"Yes, sir," said Peabody, "Colonel Augustus Twiggs, who led on the Palmetto regiment at the battle of Chapultepec, in the Mexican war, bought his bowie-knife in this identical store, and no European could wish for a better article than that."

Upon this we fell into a conversation about bowie-knives in general, and the various attempts to improve them for close conflict, in which they have been found so deadly. The most ingenious of these was one in which the back of the knife was hollowed and partly filled with quicksilver. This fluid of course fell to the handle when the weapon was raised, and when it struck it ran down towards the point, weighting it at the end, and giving greater impetus to the blow. This invention, I at once observed to Peabody, was not original. The mediæval armourers, for the same purpose, attached a running weight to their two-handed swords,—a sort of steel apple, as far as I remember,—that when the weapon was in its sheath remained near the pommel, but in striking ran down the blade.

But the true Yankee, with many virtues, is not modest in his self-assertiveness; so Peabody only spat twice, cut a fresh plug of niggerhead,

and waived the objection, observing that most of the best bowie-knives came from Sheffield, and remarking that after some of the Mexican battles the "Greasers," as the Yankees call them, who had fallen by the bowie-knife, were found with their skulls cloven almost to their teeth.

I asked if Colonel Bowie was still alive? Peabody almost sighed as he replied "No;" but thinking it manlier, he only spat violently, and shifted his quid.

That great and soaring intellect, after many years of meditation upon a destructive weapon that should be as nearly perfect as limited human intelligence could render it, struck out this great improvement on the Roman sword—the knife that derived its name from him. It was a weapon to slay Red Indians and thin off grisly "bars," to prepare wood for camp-fires and flay buffalo, to stab "painters" and lessen alligators. There was not a want of the American hunter, north or south, it did not supply,—it would do to slaughter Mexicans, or to whittle pine-logs. Let stage break down or steamboat "burn up," the knife was a friend in need. There was no computing how many brandy-smashes, gin-slings, corpse-revivers, eye-openers, Japaneses, and other spirituous compounds, the Colonel had consumed before the great idea had at last come to light; now Othello's occupation was gone, and the Colonel had nothing to do but to tread under foot the icy cobbler and the adhesive billiard-cue, and plunge once more into his all-glorious "big-plumed" wars as eager for blood as the alligator is for water when he breaks from his winter-baked sarcophagus of Mississippi mud. The oyster-saloon, the wrangling bar-room, the noisy slave-auction, the possum-hunt, the bear-chase, were to know him now no more. He arrayed himself in a laurel-crown, and started by 3:40 express train to New Orleans, a punctual Decius prepared to die for a not unworthy country.

The glories of the Mexican war I need not recapitulate. I need not count the Greaser skulls that were offered to the memory of good quiet Washington, or the number of mutilated arms and legs that paved Colonel Bowie's path to fame, and served to make his fierce ambition virtue. I need not pick up the smoking shot that flew out in tin-canisterfuls around his gory path, till the very American eagle winked again and the striped banner was blown full of stars; suffice it to say, that just as Fame was beginning to sing the gallant Colonel's praises in a short solo on her peculiar instrument—her speaking trumpet—Death slipped into the crimson concert-room, and selected the Colonel for instant promotion.

But let me not joke as if an American must always be a lean, slovenly, gaunt, brown man, in a dress-coat and pants, spitting his way through life, eating piles of mixed food with ravenous haste, and whittling away half a dinner-table between the wild turkey and the pumpkin-pie; I dare say the Colonel was rather one of those steel-framed Indian-built men, great to do and suffer, that the traveller meets so often in the frontier American States; such men as followed Nunez Bilboa,—men of the true Columbus mettle, and of the old Cortes stanchness,—men with fire in their blood,—men

with vulture eyes, bear's arms, leopards' backs, lion's tenacity, deer's endurance, raccoon's craft, and sloth's patience—great workmen of the Great Spirit, men whose flesh hardship has changed slowly from horn into stone. Oh, let us, manly and generous John Bull, own that such men are our American Cousins, and not drive them to paint us in return as top-booted and swollen with perpetual beer, insolent, overbearing, slow and resistant, stolid in prejudice, unsensitive and unchivalrous. It is time that nations destroyed these old bugbears, once real and terrible enough, when they loomed through the atmosphere of prejudice, but poor worn-out scarecrows now, seen in the pure daylight of broader truth.

But to the Colonel. In some temporary reverse of the American arms, Bowie and a mere handful of soldiers were surrounded in a mountain fort, a mere breastwork of stones that could not hold out long against the swarming multitude of Greasers, hungry for Yankee lives. The place was at length stormed, after a desperate hand-to-hand, inch-by-inch resistance. Through hurricanes of grape and sweeping storms of musket-bullets the Mexicans poured up the breach. Colonel Bowie at the time was off guard; wearied by long marches and hard fighting, he was sleeping, in his room, his knife beside his pillow. The bayonets poured in through the door, shivered by blows of the musket; but the grim man in a moment was on his legs, a raging wolf. The curtains torn down and rolled round his left arm, served for a buckler. To work went the terrible knife,—down went the thin black-haired men like sheep before a Christmas butcher. There was a terrible whooping and scramble, a cursing, a tumble of chairs and tables, some groans, some shots, and the brave Colonel lay dead, surrounded by nine of his Mexican enemies, half of them with gaping stabs, with room enough for a dozen lives to flood out, the rest with skulls clean cloven by the heavy knife.

No wonder, then, that the Colonel's grateful Southern countrymen have since "toted" such knives in all times of peril—during slave insurrections and Indian wars. That quiet New-York gentlemen often carried revolvers under their coats, and that New-York hackney-coachmen carried life-preservers under their cushions, to subdue refractory passengers, I had only been assured by reliable witnesses and natives of the country; but that Southern men, not merely bullies by profession, or slave-overseers, but quiet tradesmen, who might be supposed to be, by age and profession, of a pacific temperament, did the same, I had long ago learned, beyond all doubt, from the evidence of my own eyes. I had seen the long sheath down thigh and down the back, used to conceal weapons; I had seen the small pistol for the waistcoat pocket, and the little pistol that, in close struggles, was to be fired from the coat-sleeve. Of such and such things, indeed, spoke Hiram Peabody to me, as I weighed his glittering knives, like a reluctant juggler intent on a new trick, and rather afraid of his implements; and I went home to my hotel to see if, by reading the *Daily Avalanche*, I could ascertain for myself if the bowie-knife was still an article much in request among a highly civilised people.

Impartially, and with all love and admiration for the finer chivalry of our American brothers, I cannot conceal the fact, that I found, in the *Avalanche*, many, quite too many, indications that Colonel Bowie and his terrible invention were far from being forgotten. Among dismal paragraphs, carelessly related without sympathy and comment, of negro overseers chopped to pieces by negroes, of steamers burst and burnt up, of deadly duels and revengeful murders, I found too often such narratives as the following. The place and name I carefully suppress.

"A FUSS IN CARTHAGE.—There were lively times in this place last week, writes our correspondent, Colonel Horatio Otis, from this place. On Tuesday last, Major Jones, coming to the bar of the Monongahela Hotel for a glass of Roman punch, became irritated at the bar-keeper's first helping a coloured man to a brandy cock-tail, which he had just ordered. Words ensued, when the major, drawing out a bowie-knife, exclaimed, 'I'll see if a darned nigger is to be helped before a white man,' and stabbed the coloured man in the stomach. The unfortunate victim of the major's hasty temper died the same night."

In a subsequent *Avalanche* I read that the major was found guilty of a mild form of manslaughter, reprimanded (as foolish mothers chide spoiled children), and sent forth again, into a nigger-hating world, doubtless to rip up other coloured men, and generally advance Christian civilisation.

A little further on I would read a bolder, less fatal use of the knife of Bowie—to wit, how one Ezra Giraud, at an election tumult at St. Louis, being a good deal nudged and elbowed, his somewhat choleric temper being rather ruffled by Bell and Everet, and other political and antagonistic demonstrations, had drawn out his bowie-knife, and scored and slashed all he could meet, till some American Hercules knocked this small Python on the head, and quieted him by a mild form of concussion of the brain.

In a third place I found a young man of New Orleans boldly planting his knife in the breast of an election bully who had interrupted a pro-Douglas speaker, doing it with all the energy and calm self-approval of Cassius when he stabbed Cæsar, and manifesting such self-command, that he even walked off from the election-room, and tried to elude the police by bold denials of the—must we write it?—murder.

So certain, indeed, is the bowie-knife to appear in a quarrel, that the great anxiety of a disputant in the South seems to be, always to strike the first blow. So much so is this the case, that, in a violent argument with a Memphis or Vicksburg man, it would be unsafe to scratch the back of your neck, for it is down the back that the bowie-knife is often kept; to pull out your watch, for in the waistcoat pocket often lurks the miniature Derringer pistol; to take out your pocket-handkerchief from your coat-tail pocket, because there is the den of the "five shooter." Indeed, it is the rule, when you quarrel with suspicious characters, rowdies or gamblers, as one of them himself told me, to fire the Derringer

from the trouser-pocket the very instant you have called your opponent "darned thief," "scoundrel," or flung whatever mud of curses and abuse you chose to pelt at him. If you do not, ten to one three bullets and a bowie-knife will be in you before you can draw your pistol and fire, and there you will be dead and gouged on the bar-room floor. To draw the Derringer would be dangerous, but by firing it from the trouser or paletot pocket you gain a move in the game; and if the "blue pill" go right through brain or artery, the result to your enemy is unmistakably "checkmate," or, as a rowdy would say in billiard-room jargon, "one love."

And this very warning is no invention of English prejudice, but was delivered to me with solemn and nasal utterance by Major Osias Bluff, on a Mississippi high-pressure steamer, as he shuffled some greasy cards for a tenth game at "poker."

I need not say that I have seen hundreds of these assassinating Derringer pistols in gunsmiths' windows in New York, as I have seen every variety of dirk and dagger displayed in American country towns, among supplies of stationery, perfumery, grocery, and dry goods. It is not unusual in America to see a violin put up for sale among gown-pieces, Osnaburgs, and cottonades; it is not unusual to find inviting rows of dirks, of all sizes, in a window among piles of pirated English novels, drums of figs, and strings of vulgar stereographs, and election caricatures.

There are knives of all kinds, from the mere infant and the show-giant, from the feminine mother-of-pearl hand (a Lucrezia Borgia sort of instrument) to the stalwart hunter's knife that would smite a bull dead at a blow. I have even seen the pistol and knife combined; in fact, knives are provided for every kind of homicide that is recorded in Apollyon's tariff-tables. Far be it from me in this narrative to wish to sow the seeds of more bad feeling between the two countries. I only speak the truth about crimes, which the good men of both countries must equally with myself regret. I write only to deprecate such crimes, and the useless, dangerous custom of carrying arms, from which they mainly originate.

But let me, before passing my moral verdict, tell a short story which will still more strongly illustrate the American's principle of taking dreadful and deadly vengeance for small offences, that we should punish with a quick blow, and then forget. It will need further stories to evidence the American indifference for life, and the almost Indian revenge, by duel, that the American thinks himself justified in taking.

I was on the Alabama river, on a four days' tedious floating by a rickety card-house of a steamer that plied between Mobile—that den of fever—to Montgomery, the pretty capital of Alabama State. It was a painful progression, alternating between running on sand-bars, blowing up, and setting on fire. The boat was so frailly built that the three tiers of decks vibrated with every pulse of the high-pressure engines. The drunken pilot and slovenly captain spent the night in swearing at each other, and discussing whereabouts they were, neither of them ever know-

ing the spot within some dozen miles. The stove that lit the dirty cabin was generally red-hot; and to increase our chances of reaching land in safety, the mutinous negro crew kept running about over the cotton-bales that strewed the deck with swinging cressets full of blazing pine-knots.

But this is beside the question. My chum among the passengers was a Californian captain, who repeatedly expressed to me, in secret conversations, his belief that the darned boat would certainly blow up, and that I had better keep on the look-out, and put my valuables in my money-belt, if I "toted" such a thing. But the individual who most attracted my attention, besides the negro deck-hands, who kept making faces at the captain behind his back, was a smooth-faced, quiet, placid-looking man, whom in England I should have set down at once as a respectable druggist, or a country-town haberdasher with a good connection; but here, in the Slave States, I presumed him to be a small cotton planter, with some dozen slaves, which he turned out to be. He was neatly dressed in black wrapper and wide-awake; black "pants," of course; and wore a little gold bell at his button-hole, to indicate his unshaken devotion to Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, the Presidential candidate, and his determination, at all hazards, to maintain the Union.

In every thing the Bell-and-Breckenridge man looked orderly and respectable, except that his lower lip was much swollen and cut on the right side, and that he had a bar of black plaster on it, which his hand kept nervously touching. I noticed this the more because a slight gloom over his face, coupled with this pouting lip, gave Bell-and-Breckenridge an expression of sullenness that seemed to indicate some recent misfortune.

"Perhaps," I thought, "as we all come from New Orleans, Bell-and-Breckenridge has been tampering with the green-cloth tables of that seductive city. Perhaps he has been drinking too many of those 'whisky skins' or 'Catawba cobbles,' and has been robbed of his money."

It needed not the slightest effort, I found, to extract the whole story of his misfortune. It was unnecessary even to bait the conversational trap. He had been sitting in the bar-room of the St. Charles Hotel at New Orleans, when a notorious bully of the city came up to him, quite drunk, and without word or parley, or curse or threat, struck him a tremendous blow on the mouth. Before a second could be struck, the bystanders rushed in and separated them.

"I followed the villain about for several days after," said Bell-and-Breckenridge, sullenly touching his lip, as if to keep alive the recollection of his wrong; "and I found him at last in a police-court, where he was being fined seventeen dollars for striking another gentleman" (Americans never call any one a man unless when they wish to insult him).

"And did not that give you extreme satisfaction?" said I innocently, so often accustomed in England to see emollient bank-notes applied as the best plasters for such wounds of honour.

"Thunder!" said Bell-and-Breckenridge, touching his lip for the thousandth time, to stir up the burnt-down coals of hatred in his heart. "If I'd only had my little penknife! but I'd left it behind on my mantel-piece at home, and had nothing."

"Better as it was," I said pacifically, rather exulting in the bloodlessness of the rencontre.

"Sure as there's cotton in Cairo, I'd have killed him if I'd met him!" said Bell-and-Breckenridge, following out his old bloodhound-trail of thought. What dreadful, quiet persistency there was in that man's voice. "Thunder! if I'd only had my little five-shooter with me, I'd have made the tallest dead body, stranger, of that rowdy as you ever saw!"

It was some days before we left that dreadful uninsurable vessel; but never, whether at dirty breakfast, at dirtier dinner, at expectorating circle round the stove, or high up in the glass pilot-house, did I ever see Bell-and-Breckenridge—whether by torchlight or daylight, never—but he rubbed his swollen lip and growled, "Thunder! if I'd only had my little five-shooter, I'd have made the tallest dead body, stranger, of that darned rowdy—yes, sure."

I think, eventually, this sternest Roman of us all got out at night at some wood-landing, and so disappeared, like a vengeful and erring ghost, from our confine; but I have no doubt in the world that he strode up the steep bank, lit by our niggers' blazing pine-brands, still exclaiming, "Thunder! if I'd only had," &c.

His meeting again with his wife and five-shooter must have been quite affecting.

It was only a few days after this that, walking on the pretty, breezy sea-terrace at Charleston, watching a steamer trying fussily to back off a sand-bar at the mouth of the harbour, just within the forts, I fell into conversation with a dapper, black-eyed young French Canadian, who, I soon found, was the bookkeeper and manager in a fashionable druggist's store in Charles Street, New Orleans. He was a handsome young coxcomb, and in a forgivable way not unconscious of his clear brown skin and large lustrous eyes; he was on his loitering way home to Quebec, after a double attack of *dangue* and an acclimating seasoning of yellow fever.

He had at first lived at Chicago, he said vivaciously, and with gay good-nature, "that wonderful city of yesterday."

"And left the aguish Michigan shore," said I, with surprise, "and the teeming life of Wisconsin, for perpetual fever and the sluggish sensual death in life of New Orleans and the South."

The civil Absalom explained to me that a slight difficulty had led to his leaving Chicago.

"Indeed!" I replied, with a look that expressed a curiosity not rudely hungry, but still willing to be fed.

The slight difficulty was this. On first visiting Chicago, he had formed the acquaintance of a man whom he afterwards had to avoid,

discovering him to be a professional gambler. One night, as he (Absalom) and a friend, the son of a magistrate, were playing at billiards at the Richmond House Hotel, the gambler, flushed with drink, came in, and seeing him at one of the tables, went up to him and struck him across the mouth, exclaiming, "So you'll cut me again, will you?"

"Of course you knocked him down," said I, hot with the insult, as if I had myself received the blow.

"I wouldn't dirty my hands with such a fellow," said Absalom, whiffing out a scented handkerchief with a fashionable air; "I drew out my revolver, and shot him through the shoulder."

"Weren't you glad you didn't hit him in a vital part?" said I, to try the young bloodsucker.

"Not I!" replied Absalom, switching his wild-grape cane. "I wanted to shoot him, and I didn't care where the ball went; that was his look-out. I knew the fellow was a coward, for I saw his face turn white when I put my hand behind for my revolver. How he groaned and roared when he thought I'd killed him! He did so. Yes!"

"And what followed?"

"I instantly gave myself up to my friend's father, who luckily happened to be a magistrate. I was tried and acquitted, because I proved the man struck me first; but I left Chicago, because I thought the rowdy's friends might make a fuss, and do me some harm at night, particularly as I was a Lincoln man."

A severe punishment, I thought, for a small offence. But then I am one of an unchivalrous nation, and do not generally carry arms, especially at home.

"Only the lowest of the low use their fists," said an Irish-American gentleman to me, as we discussed this question in another far different place, namely, the great hall of stalagmite pillars in the Mammoth Cave at Kentucky. "We hold it brutal to use the fist. But," he added, "I don't understand your feelings about these things in the old country. Last year I went to see my brother in Ireland, and I found him constantly giving me the lie, though, of course, unintentionally, and in pure jocularity. 'Brother,' I had to say at last, 'I know you don't mean any harm, but I must really beg you not to pain me with those expressions, which, over in America, we consider only blood can possibly wipe out.' Yes, sir, I can hardly explain to you how it jarred upon me."

But with two stories,—one of an intended duel and one of an attempted assassination, both of which help to illustrate the heat of American blood, and the carelessness with which the semi-Indian Yankee regards his own life and that of his enemy,—fierce shade of Colonel Bowie, bear with me while I write.

A few years since, an American merchant, not unknown or unregarded by me, was compelled to demand payment of a debt from a banker of high standing in a Southern city, whose affairs, it was generally reported, were getting daily more and more embarrassed. The banker, after many

turns and windings, at last reluctantly fixed on a day for an interview and a settlement. The day came, the men met; the merchant calm and inflexibly persistent, the banker pale, uneasy, restless, and disconcerted. Suddenly the banker leaped to the door, double-locked it, and putting a revolver to the merchant's head, swore he would blow his brains out if he did not instantly sign an acquittance freeing him from all charges. He expected to intimidate, but the miserable dastard little knew my friend. He knew the cheating coward did not dare to fire, and he braved him, and forced him at last, cowed and baffled, to open the door and let him forth. The instant he left the house, he went to a friend and chose a second, named rifles as the weapons, distance forty paces, each man as he fired to advance ten paces for the second shot, till one or both fell. Half that night, leaving his friends in his hotel-bar to drink and wrangle about the quarrel, the merchant spent preparing for death, alone in his bedroom. He would not drink, he said, because he was determined to kill his man. The other half he went to bed to sleep soundly, so that his nerves might be in full tension, and his eye and aim sure, on the morrow. But at daybreak the bedroom door opened, and a friend entered, bringing a message of retraction from the banker. At first the merchant would not receive the message. He wanted no apology. Nothing but a life would satisfy him. It was a great crime he had to revenge.

Three times repulsed, three times the herald returned, with each time fuller and fuller offers of contrition and abasement. The villain was a coward. Next day, in full Exchange, and amid friends and enemies, the guilty man knelt to his injured foe, and confessed his sin. Perhaps not cowardice bowed him, but the sense of deep contrition and shame. From that day till this the guilty man has never lifted up his head among his companions. He walks the streets of — a branded and disgraced coward.

Years ago this happened; yet, when the merchant told it me, his eyes kindled like those of a hungry wolf when he smells food, his great chest dilated, and his sinewy hands seemed to feel round him for his rifle. Yet he was as tender-hearted a man as ever kissed a child's forehead, and, save when roused by insult, would not have hurt a fly.

But what is this, to stories I could tell you, on equally reliable testimony, of duels fought but yesterday in the Western States, in dark rooms, in saw-pits, or in open day, with knives, each combatant having his right arm tied to his enemy's? And did I not visit that lively place on the Mississippi, where the rival staffs of the *Daily Avalanche* and *Daily Mosquito* used to meet every other week, and "pot" at each other with rifles in the open street?

But of the attempted assassination. It was Captain Bonser of Mobile who told me that a year ago, having exerted himself to rescue American sailors from the hands of the lodging-house keepers, who get them in debt, and then ship them off drunk, receiving their wages for them in advance,—a vile system, that is worse than dry-rot to the American navy,

—one night, returning from a party, a notorious crimp, whom he had observed dodging him, suddenly fired at him (the captain), sending a bullet through his hat. He (the captain) instantly ran to the nearest guard-house, and begged the man might be instantly arrested. Not they—not a man would stir.

“Why, I guess,” said the foreman, spitting disgustfully, “mister, you ain’t hurt. What on arth’s the use of troubling? Let well alone.”

And so the man escaped. So much for the sanctity of life. These are hard facts, O shade of Colonel Bowie; I relate them with regret, yet not with any self-righteousness. When the Highlanders carried arms, they fought perpetually; when we English wore swords, every tavern-night had its duel; when we Elizabethans wore daggers, stabbings were perpetual.

Yet still, O Colonel, though Indians are raging on your frontier, and the desperadoes of all Europe throng your cities, I still regret the American’s habit of carrying arms. It is hard to forgive when one has a pistol in the pocket and a knife next the shirt. The shot fired, the knife-blow struck, are too often irremediable. The fist gives time for reflection, and a man must be bad indeed if he does not relent before the hour or two it takes to pummel an enemy to death.

Brother Jonathan! brother Jonathan! throw, then, to the butcher thy butchering knife, double thy fist like a man, give up gouging and other Indian and barbarous practices, and learn to “fight and be friends,” as the good old English maxim runs.

Some Curious Cases.

ONE of the tragedies to which I alluded in my "Rough Notes," in the first Number of this Magazine, has terminated on that public stage the gallows, with Mr. Calcraft as principal performer. A frightful and awful conclusion to the career of any human being, be he ever so criminal; more dreadful still when the man dies protesting his innocence, and commending his wife to public care and charity. The Murderer's Widow! What a title for romance or melodrama! What abysses of crime and suffering and degradation does it open to us! Now, as this man was convicted upon evidence purely circumstantial, and tried by *one* jury only, there are some people who do not hesitate to express their belief in his innocence, although their doubts grow fainter, and their protests are less loud, now that they have ceased to be of any practical use. I have heard some women, in most worldly matters sensible enough, declare that it was impossible, or at any rate highly improbable, that a man could be a murderer who displayed the tender solicitude about those near and dear to him which Mullins did. They forget, these tender-hearted but illogical ladies, Lord Byron's hero Conrad the Corsair, with his

"One virtue and a thousand crimes."

They forget that, on their trial at Edinburgh, the cold-blooded and systematic murderer Burke manifested heartfelt exultation at the acquittal of his wife, although he felt that his own fate was certain. Has not that great moralist Dr. Johnson said, with his usual sense and wisdom, that vanity does not forsake a man even in his dying hour? Why, look at the well-known case of Eugene Aram. He committed an atrocious murder, actuated by the love of gain,—in many respects just such a murder as that perpetrated by Mullins,—and yet, in the highly-argumentative, elegant, and unimpassioned address which he made to the jury, he would not condescend to be guilty of falsehood—the perhaps pardonable falsehood of denying his guilt. He seems to have studiously avoided it;* nor would he make any pathetic appeal *ad misericordiam*, which doubtless he could have done in a high strain of sustained eloquence. Many of the last words he wrote before he attempted suicide would not have misbecome the lips of Christian martyrdom.† The man-

* The judge who tried him almost taunted him with this. The jury, it is said, were about to acquit him before they heard the evidence summed up.

† These were some of them: "I solicitously recommend myself to the Eternal and Almighty Being, the God of Nature, *if I have done amiss*. But, perhaps I have not; and I hope this thing will never be imputed to me. Though I am now stained by malevolence, and suffer by prejudice, I hope to rise fair and unblemished. My life was not polluted, my morals irreproachable, and my opinions orthodox. I slept sound till three o'clock, awaked, and then writ these lines:

ner of any man's *exit* from the world depends more upon his nervous system than any thing else. Saints have been mentally tortured in the hour of dissolution, while men of bad lives, and with sin-burdened consciences, have welcomed with a smile the King of Terrors, and played with the javelin of the great enemy.

I was compelled to conclude my last Article in a manner painfully abrupt, and apparently inconsequential. The intelligent reader, however, will have gathered two or three conclusions which I very briefly indicated. *Emphasis gratiâ*, I will repeat them.

1st. We are incapable of judging of the merits of any case in a satisfactory manner unless present at the trial. A written report, however diffuse, is more or less inaccurate,—at least, I have always found it to be so in cases in which I have been employed as counsel, or, when unemployed, I have been a careful auditor and spectator,—for it is necessary to be both. So much depends upon the general manner and demeanour of witnesses, which no report, however careful, can convey. So much depends upon advocacy, which may sometimes be strong, but is more often weak. Of this we can only judge by hearing it, and watching its effect upon the jury. I cite a clear and forcible statement on this subject which I have read since I commenced this series.

"The true principle appears to me to be to estimate the value of evidence *entirely by the effect which it does in fact produce upon the minds of those who hear it*. The value of evidence is surely measured as exactly by the state of mind which it produces as a force is measured by the weight which it will lift. If a set of circumstances are put in evidence which, though consistent with the prisoner's innocence, *leave no doubt at all in the minds of those who hear of them as to his guilt*, the evidence does as much, produces as great an effect, and is therefore experimentally proved to be as strong, as if they had been inconsistent with his innocence."* How rash, then, of inconsiderate folk, who, from newspaper reports, often carelessly read, point their suspicions without reticence or reserve at some one individual, as in the case of the Road mystery!

"Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus."

But in the case of newspaper reports we apply neither the auricular nor ocular tests.

Come, pleasing rest, eternal slumber fall,
Seal mine, that once must seal the eyes of all ;
Calm and composed my soul her journey takes ;
No guilt that troubles, and no heart that aches.
Adieu ! thou sun, all bright like her arise ;
Adieu ! fair friends, and all that's good and wise.'

"These lines, found along with the foregoing, were supposed to be written by Aram just before he cut himself with the razor." *Annual Register*, 1759, p. 362.

* *The Characteristics of English Criminal Law*. By Fitzjames Stephen, LL.B. *Cambridge Essays*. 1857.

2d. Circumstantial evidence is in its nature so difficult, so likely to mislead the mind of a comparatively uneducated man, that I again venture to suggest, that in all cases where the penalty is death there should be, if the first trial does not end in an acquittal, the *power of moving for a new trial*,—and that trial should be before a special jury, i. e. a jury composed of men of better education than common juries usually are. I am far from saying that there should not be the right of moving for a new trial in all criminal cases where the presiding judge would certify that any doubt in his mind existed about the verdict, or where counsel were prepared to say that he had misdirected the jury. The only chance of the escape of an innocent man condemned now, is an argument before the Court of Criminal Appeal on any nice legal technicality that may arise,—and in most cases there is not even the chance of this arising. His other hope may be an appeal made by means of petition to the Home Secretary. This is surely of all the least satisfactory. The Minister of the Home Office may, in the first place, not be a lawyer. In the next, he has to judge of the merits of the case, not from oral testimony, but from a written report. It appears very unreasonable that he should disturb the verdict of twelve men who have seen and heard the witnesses, and who have heard counsel on both sides, especially when the judge, as in the case of Dr. Smethurst, concurs in that verdict. A new trial before a special jury would, at any rate, be more rational than this.

So strongly has this doubt about the unsatisfactory nature of circumstantial evidence been felt, that under the Civil Law the evidence of *two* witnesses was required in capital cases; and Jeremy Bentham proposed that a jury should declare what were the odds as to the guilt or innocence of the accused,—whether five to one, seven to one, or ten to one,—and that, unless a certain degree of probability (*e. g.* seven to one) were arrived at, punishment should not be inflicted. How far this would be practicable it is not my business here to discuss. I did not propose to write a treatise on criminal jurisprudence, nor even an exhaustive or methodical treatise on evidence; nor a systematic essay on circumstantial evidence, in a popular style; but some “Notes,” made while reading some of the best books on the subject, and a few cases to be found in the *Reports*.^{*} If I succeed in sending my lay reader to the *Reports*,—to *Cobbett's State Trials*,—to *Townsend's Modern State Trials*,—to *Wills's Essay on Circumstantial Evidence*, a clever book, quite as well suited to the layman as to the lawyer,—to Mr. Burke's *Romance of the Forum*,—to the *Sessions Reports of the Central Criminal Court*, and other sources of information to which these works will

^{*} To my professional brethren need I recommend the following authorities? *Best's Principles of Evidence*; *Best on Presumptions*; *Taylor on Evidence*; *Greenleaf on Evidence*; *Magardus de Probationibus*; *Menochius de Præsumptionibus*; *Glassford*; *Gresley*; *Philips and Amos*; *Joy on Confessions*; *Corpus Juris Glossatum*; *Mittermaier, Traité de la Preuve en Matière Criminelle*.

lead them,—I am sure he or she will thank me for much of what Dr. Johnson called “useful pleasure.” Meanwhile, I propose, with less ambitious attempt, to mention “SOME CURIOUS CASES,” and to remark upon them in my own gossiping and egotistical way.

Here is a curious story, told by a London police detective officer to a relation of mine. I vary no important fact, and merely alter names. Henry Ranthorpe was a literary man; he had made some slight success as a provincial journalist and a political pamphleteer. He had a tragedy in his trunk, a plot of a comedy in his head, and one five-pound note in his pocket; and he must needs come up, in the naughtiness of his heart, stirred by

“That last infirmity of noble mind,”

to win golden opinions and earn golden sovereigns in the great world of London. He had, moreover, made what is called an improvident marriage, that is, he had married a pretty girl without a farthing, who nevertheless was a very good wife. They were as happy as the *res angusta* would permit them to be. They took cheap lodgings in “the wilds of Pimlico.” The tragedy had not been accepted (tragedies never *are*); at least the manager had not vouchsafed a reply. Nevertheless, he worked at the comedy laboriously and hopefully. As he had, however, not been for years in a London theatre, he thought, wisely enough, that it would considerably assist him if he saw a play acted at the house where *he* intended *his* five acts to be brought out. He had no special interest with actors or critics by which to secure an “order;” and his wife agreed with him that the expenditure of half a crown, low as their finances were, would nevertheless be a wise outlay. Meanwhile a pair of boots, the only shoe-leather which he had brought with him from the country, had become so heelless, dilapidated, and shabby, that he made an investment in a pair of cheap shoes, and discarded the ruined bluchers. How to dispose of them was now his difficulty. He was ashamed to give them away at his lodgings; and they were not, after a grave consultation on the subject between his wife and himself, deemed worthy of repair. He proposed taking them out into the street at night, and wilfully making away with them, when the *uxor placens* descried a dusty-looking cupboard high up in the wall of the bed-room, into which he threw his once-serviceable boots. The cupboard-door would not close; but the cupboard being high up and in a corner, the bluchers did not show.

He started on his trip to the Temple of Thespis, leaving his fond and self-denying little wife to her tea, her needlework, and her anticipations of his report of the evening’s entertainment. He entered the pit-entrance of the — Theatre just after the first rush of half-past-six punctual folk had gone in; deposited his solitary half-crown, the only money which, with the exception of a few pence, he had about him; and received his check-ticket, and was about to pass on, full of disappointment at not having been earlier, and of excitement at the prospect of a little novel amusement. To his intense astonishment, he had scarcely proceeded a yard when the money-

taker called out to him and a policeman who was standing by simultaneously. The man in the little box had twisted the half-crown, which was a bad one; was gesticulating wildly, and declaiming incoherently; and Henry Ranthorpe, in a few moments, was in the custody of the officer in blue. It was in vain that he protested his innocence, produced his card, gave his address, mentioned the names of two or three friends he knew in London. The money-taker winked knowingly to the officer, who smiled tranquilly; and to the station-house they went. The inspector took the charge, heard the evidence, and he was placed in a wretched dark cell, where a riotous drunkard was singing and crying in turns. Afraid to alarm his wife by sending to her to state the misfortune that had befallen him, he secured, by the good offices of the inspector, who was struck with his respectable appearance and his manner, a messenger, whom he sent with a note to his landlord, and to a friend in Piccadilly, who was a respectable householder. They arrived, and gave so satisfactory an account of him, that the inspector, overstepping his duty, I think, permitted him to go; and he reached home rather earlier than his wife expected him, with very little to say about the comedy which he was to have enjoyed, but with a full and impassioned narrative of the calamity that had befallen him. They sat together over their crust of bread-and-cheese and glass of beer, vowing vengeance against the manager of the theatre and his *employés*, and discussing the expediency of bringing an action for false imprisonment.

They little knew how really narrow the escape had been. *A few days* afterwards, Ranthorpe observed the ugly old boots protruding a little at the cupboard-door. To get rid of this eye-sore, he took a chair, placed his trunk upon it, and opened the dusty cupboard, in order to effectually secrete the boots. You may endeavour to imagine his astonishment when, in moving them, he descried two large bags. They were very heavy; and what do you suppose they contained? ONE HUNDRED BAD HALF-CROWNS EACH. There could be no doubt about their quality. He showed them to his wife, whose astonishment was as great as his own. They began to entertain strange suspicions about the landlord; and next began to reflect that, after what had happened at the theatre, he would probably *suspect them*. They, however, rang the bell, summoned the worthy householder, and showed him the useless and dangerous booty. They were relieved, however, by seeing his broad countenance, at first filled with amazement and distraction, suddenly illuminated with a glance of profound penetration, and a smile of self-satisfied sagacity. "I quite understand it now, ma'am," said their host, addressing Mrs. Ranthorpe. "Some months ago, two young men came one day and took these rooms. They gave me no reference, but offered to pay in advance, which, as I always like to be on the safe side, I allowed them to do. Their hours were very strange; but they came in and went out very quiet, and gave but a very little trouble. Indeed, my missus said they were the best lodgers we had had for this many a day. The money was regular, and, what seems odd now, none of it *bad*. One day they went out together, after they had been in this house

eight weeks; and from that day to this, I have never seen or heard of them. They certainly were very mysterious, and never told what their occupation was. A few clothes they left are up-stairs in a chest of drawers now, and a carpet-bag and a portmanteau. I did have my suspicions, which I mentioned to the old woman, when I saw that two young men somewhat answering to their description had been tried at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to transportation."

Here ends this *curious case*. But suppose upon his arrest at the theatre officers had been sent to search his lodgings, and the two bags, as they would have certainly been, found. His wife could not have been a witness, the possession of a bad half-crown, and the finding of two bags of bad half-crowns in his bed-room, his poverty, his almost friendlessness in London,—must not these facts have inevitably caused his conviction. Of what avail, against all this, witnesses to character? Of what avail the ingenuity and eloquence of counsel. The landlord of the house, so wise *after* the event, would probably have directed his suspicions immediately to his new lodgers, and the fact of Ranthorpe sitting up alone at late hours of the night to write, and other facts having in them some *scintilla* of suspicion, would have been marshalled against him in compact array by the barrister prosecuting for the Mint. And this would have been a case of purely circumstantial evidence. The moral of the story is too obvious—the danger which a jury is always in of convicting an innocent man. This ambitious young *littérateur* might have been torn from his affectionate little wife, two hopeful and loving hearts broken, two respectable families disgraced, and a career of subsequent repute and usefulness nipped in the bud.

I by no means am of opinion that in cases of circumstantial evidence juries always err on the side of severity. Although I have, in the course of a short professional experience, seen three or four innocent persons convicted, I have seen five times that number of guilty escape. I am giving of course only my own opinion, but on cases to which I gave the most unremitting attention. In Wills's *Essay on Circumstantial Evidence* two cases may be found in which the verdict of the jury appears to be in exact disproportion to the amount of evidence. My space will not permit me to quote them at length, but they will repay perusal. The first is that of Belaney (Wills's *Circ. Ev.* p. 159), a surgeon, who was tried at the Old Bailey in 1844. He was tried for poisoning his wife. There was motive, for she had made her will in his favour; he refused to send for a doctor, saying that he was one himself, and that his wife had heart complaint. Prussic acid was found in her stomach. The prisoner had bought prussic acid the day before his wife's death. His defence was, that he had bought the prussic acid for a complaint of his own (and it was proved that such a prescription had been given to him), that he accidentally broke the bottle, poured the prussic acid into a tumbler, and that his wife, mistaking it for some Epsom salts which was near it, in his absence took the deadly poison. In answer to this letters were pro-

duced to show that he had written a series of inconsistent falsehoods about her illness. The jury *acquitted* him. The case which Mr. Stephen has quoted from Wills in contrast to this (*Wills*, p. 192), is that of John Donellan, tried at Warwick in 1781, for the murder, by poison, of his brother-in-law, Sir Theodosius Boughton.* The facts are far weaker than in the case I have just quoted. The medical evidence for the prosecution was very meagre; and for the defence the celebrated John Hunter swore that the symptoms might have arisen from other causes, and that the appearances on dissection arose from putrefaction. The jury *convicted*, and Donellan was hanged.

Now upon these cases I do not attempt to dogmatise, for I am judging of them *by reports*. I merely cite the opinion of others that as verdicts they were illogical; and if so, they prove my proposition that circumstantial evidence is in its nature so difficult a kind of evidence, that in cases of life and death it should be tested by scientific and not by unlearned men.

For such sad miscarriages of justice as the cases I have previously mentioned of Eliza Fenning, Ambrose Gwynneth, and others, Mr. Fitzjames Stephen consoles himself in a philosophical way (p. 37):

"It is easy, as a matter of rhetoric," he writes, "to say that it is better that ten guilty persons should escape than that one innocent one should suffer; but it would be absurd to attempt to maintain, as a matter of logic, that it was better that ten thousand guilty persons should escape than that one innocent one should suffer. *The occasional condemnation of the innocent is an unavoidable evil which will happen under all systems*; and just as we know when a railway is made that a certain number of people will be killed in making it, so we know that whenever a nation administers justice it will sometimes punish innocent men."

This is so true that it is truistic; but it is not the less frightful to contemplate its reality. By most jealously admitting that this is the case, by most earnestly striving that it shall not be so, by arriving even at a perhaps Utopian perfection in the administration of the law, shall we alone succeed in making these miscarriages of justice less frequent. I have suggested two remedies. Mr. Stephen adds another, which I cheerfully quote and endorse (p. 38):

"There is, however, one special cause of such catastrophes which is peculiar to our own procedure, and which might be easily removed. *I allude to the extraordinary haste with which trials are at times conducted*. Bellingham shot Mr. Perceval, was arrested, committed, tried, and *hung* (qy. hanged?), *within little more than a week*, and was therefore prevented from setting up the defence of madness. I myself heard a man sentenced to death on one Friday for a murder committed on the preceding Friday. The prisoner's appearance was imbecile, and he was known to suffer from epileptic fits. He was

* "It was stated by counsel, but *does not appear in proof*, that on attaining twenty-one Sir Theodosius would have been entitled absolutely to an estate of 2000*l.* per annum, which, in the event of his dying under that age, would have descended to Mr. Donellan." *Wills*, p. 142.

pardoned on the ground of insanity, but not a word was said of this in court; and he was not even defended, except by a gentleman to whom the judge handed the depositions from the bench after the trial had begun, and who was not only unacquainted with the facts, but heard the evidence for the first time in court.*

The indecent haste of Bellingham's trial, and of the one just quoted by Mr. Stephen, stand in disreputable contrast, as far as the duration of the proceedings is concerned, with some celebrated French *causes célèbres*. The trial of the monk Leotade† began on the 7th, and lasted until the 26th of February 1848. It was broken off on account of the revolution and recommenced on the 16th of March, and ended on the 4th of April. Palmer's, the longest criminal trial of modern days, was shorter than this, and Palmer's was a case which required a vast amount of scientific evidence for the prosecution and for the defence, whereas Leotade was tried for rape and murder. The evidence in the case was purely circumstantial; but the facts are too numerous to admit even of a short summary in this paper.

The presence or absence of any one prominent fact in a case has an especial tendency to mislead the "twelve intelligent men." The counsel who, in defending a man for stealing something from a cart, asked a witness whether he saw the pigs in the cart, and how many pigs there were, imported the pigs into the case most ingeniously, though unprofessionally. There were no pigs at all, except in the fertile imagination of the counsel. The chairman of Quarter Sessions was either deaf or careless, or both, and the jury, readily accepting the fiction of the presence of the pigs, discredited a witness who had not seen them, and acquitted the prisoner. On the other hand, in cases of murder or of cutting and wounding, the display of some instrument or other, whether it be the right one or not, has a most prejudicial effect against a prisoner on the mind of a jury. About two years ago, at the Spring Assizes, I was defending a man for murder; and although the case for the prosecution was conducted in the most fair and temperate manner as far as the opening speech of counsel and the examination in chief of witnesses were concerned, yet in the witness-box were displayed a hideous-looking knife, and the clothes of the deceased saturated with blood. I observed what an effect these had upon the jury; and when I addressed them, I endeavoured to throw ridicule upon the theatrical display that had been made of the garments and the knife. On the identity of the weapon, owing to some facts connected with the way in which it was said to be found, and its subsequent custody, I threw considerable doubt, and quoted the following case from Taylor's *Medical Jurisprudence*, cap. xxii. p. 253:

"It sometimes happens on a criminal investigation that a weapon is presented to a medical witness, and he is required to say whether the wound found on the body of a person was produced by it. On the certainty of a

* At the Northampton Assizes in 1855.

† Procès du Frère Leotade, Leipsig, 1851.

weapon being used, it is not uncommon for prisoners, even when found guilty upon the clearest evidence, to declare that no weapon was employed by them, but that the wound had been occasioned by accidental circumstances. A witness should remember that he is seldom in a position to swear that a particular weapon produced at a trial must have been used by the prisoner; he is only justified in saying that the wound was caused *either by it or one similar to it*. In reference to this subject, Schwoier relates the following case. A man was stabbed by another in the face, and a knife *with the blade entire* was brought forward as circumstantial evidence against him, the surgeon having declared that the wound must have been caused by this knife. The wounded person recovered; but a year afterwards an abscess formed in the face, and the *broken point of the real weapon was discharged from it*. The wound could not therefore have been produced by the knife which was brought forward as evidence against the prisoner at the trial. (Lehre von dem Kindermorde.)"

This case seemed to have much effect on the jury; and as in cross-examination I had "got out" some facts about a fall which the deceased had while struggling with the prisoner on a door-step where there was a scraper, they were doubtful whether a knife was used or not, and they found a verdict of manslaughter.

Whether against or in favour of the accused, any one tangible and prominent fact is of great moment with uneducated men, who do not, in considering their verdict, remember the whole of the evidence they have heard, or comprehend the nice connection that may exist between facts apparently isolated. The missing night-gown in the mystery of the Road murder, like the blood-stained garment in the case of Beatrice Cenci, may be very important; or, on the other hand, its discovery might not give the slightest clue to the perpetrator of the crime; and its absence, though it would naturally seem part of the awful tragedy, may be totally unconnected with it.

I have more than once spoken of the great danger of circumstantial evidence, and there can be no doubt but that it does require the most acute and patient examination of it to prevent its occasionally misleading us. Our best safeguard lies in the rigid strictness with which the rules of evidence are observed in English courts. It would be impossible that in any court of ours matters likely to prejudice the prisoner could be introduced, unless before the most incompetent of the "great incompetent unpaid." All facts irrelevant to the issue, all hearsay, are carefully excluded. The very form of question is so scrupulously watched by counsel for the prisoner, that it is not uncommon to hear lengthy and learned arguments arise solely on that, or the exact words of the question at last framed by the presiding judge. In this respect our courts contrast most favourably with those of most other countries, and certainly with those of France. Any reader who knows the reports of the celebrated trial of Madame Laffarge for the poisoning of her husband,* must have read with disgust

* There is an interesting article on the subject in the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxxv. The Editor of this Magazine was present at the trial, and heard Orfila's state-

the questions put to the accused by the judge, and with still more abhorrence the tone and animus of M. Decoux, the Avocat-general. The Acte d'Accusation itself is a document which it is impossible to read without the warmest indignation, for it imports into the case topics of prejudice which the most unscrupulous counsel in England would not venture to touch even when roused by any vehement antagonism on the part of counsel for the defence.

It is by a jealous observation of the rules of evidence, by clever courageous advocacy, and by public trials fully reported, that the life and liberty of those accused can best be protected, or the violated majesty of the laws be vindicated; and we shall best do this by not giving too unquestioning or blind an adherence to the theory, that circumstantial evidence is in its nature so satisfactory and convincing; for it has been demonstrated by sad experience that Paley's aphorism must be accepted with reserve, and that "circumstances can lie."

In conclusion, I cite a paragraph from Mr. Pitt Taylor's work on evidence:

"If 'circumstances' mean—and they can have no other meaning—those facts which lead to the inference of the fact in issue, they not only can, but constantly *do, lie*; or in other words, the conclusion deduced from them is often false. Thus when at Melita the viper fastened on St. Paul's hand, the barbarians said among themselves, '*No doubt this man is a murderer*;' but when they saw that no harm came to him, 'they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.' Here both conclusions were alike false.* So in *Macbeth*, the master-poet of nature has described Lennox, Macduff, and the other chieftains as erroneously assuming, first, that the grooms had murdered their king, 'because their hands and faces were all badged with blood, so were their daggers, which unwiped were found upon their pillows;' and next, that 'they were suborned' by the king's two sons who had 'stolen away and fled.' It is no answer to say that these are mere instances of hasty and illogical inferences, which display only the ignorance and presumption of the persons by whom they were drawn, and that the 'circumstances which cannot lie' are such as necessarily lead to a certain conclusion. Who is to decide on this necessity? Throw a case of circumstantial evidence into the form of a syllogism, and it will be found that the major premiss rests solely on the erring experience of the tribunal to whom it is presented. Besides, these very circumstances must be proved, like direct facts, by witnesses who are equally capable with others of deceiving or being deceived. So that in no sense is it possible to say that a conclusion drawn from circumstantial evidence can amount to absolute certainty, or in other words, that circumstances cannot lie." (Vol. i. p. 76.)

ment in answer to Raspail, that he could get as much arsenic out of the table before him, or out of the body of M. le President himself, as had been found in the body of M. Laffarge.

"* So when Jacob saw Joseph's coat of many colours stained with kid's blood, 'he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is *without doubt* rent in pieces.' (*Genesis xxxvii. 33.*)"

Abbandonata:

ARE they gone at last? am I left to my rest?

Alone with the snake at my wild heart's core!
Through the hateful day, from the East to the West,
The sun has shone down on song, dance, and jest—
On a love that is mine no more!

The Orient sky is white and still,
A pale moon wanes in the pearly South,
The wind sighs cold o'er the pine-clad hill,
Like the moaning breath all dank and chill,
From a dying sleeper's mouth.

Woe worth the hour when I was born!
Must the clay live on when the soul has fled?
O God! to rise with the glaring morn,
To wring out the dregs of my cup of scorn,
When my heart and my brain are dead!

What have I to do with hopes or with fears?
For he will marry Eleanor Gray,
Though he swore he had loved me from childhood's years,
Had lived in my smiles, had worshiped my tears,
And she—came yesterday!

Blithely she prated of that and this—
My chosen friend, with her faithless smile;
"She had heard of my fortune, my hopes, my bliss,
"She gave me joy"—with a Judas kiss—
Glancing at him the while.

And in that glance I was bought and sold—
Not in vain was the net spread out for that bird;
He was so gallant, so gracious, and bold!
Poor, greedy, and vain, she wanted his gold,
And lured him without a word.

By a droop of the lashes, a turn of the lip,
By the languid wreath of her syren neck ;
By the lightest touch of her finger-tip,
By the idlest sound her tongue let slip,
She held his breath at her beck.

Yesternight, at the even-song,
They wandered and murmured under the trees;
All to-day, 'mid the wondering throng,
Heedless who marked him, reckless how long
He sat at Eleanor's knees.

His eager lips would fluttering seek
Her dainty hand—why, mine is as fair!
Or rashly hover so close to her cheek,
That she feigned to blush—that maiden meek,
Yet smiled as she bade him beware!

What can she boast that I am not worth,
Save her wanton smile and the false blue eyes?
What evil spell was cast at her birth
That she should thus beggar to uttermost dearth
The soul where my treasure lies?

My life-thread was spun out to-night,
Snapt without mercy, or hope, or aid;
On the earth, on the sky, emblazoned bright,
I read what was done 'neath the still moonlight,
What was said in the jasmine shade.

Broken it came—"Love, take this ring."
" 'Twas hers!"—"Nay, I swear it, I love but thee ;
Oh, stony heart for so poor a thing,
To doubt me!" the easy song to sing
To an old, old melody.

Then a deathly pause. The odour faint
Of the jasmine flowers crept over my brow ;
But their pure sweet breath was a graveyard taint,
And a graveyard knell was the tender plaint
Of the traitor's pleading vow.

"But thy troth-plight given to Isabel?"

He laughed aloud—"What are words but air?
All love to her is an empty spell,
My home will be cold as a convent-cell,
And dull as a hermit's prayer."

"Nay, nay, she is fair"—"As a saint of snow!"

"And kind"—"As the beams of a wintry moon.
Oh, love, let me gather the honeyed glow
On thy ripe red lips, like roses which blow
In the fire of an Eastern noon!"

Then slow, slow kisses—and melting eyes
Gazed each into each. Oh, the maddening pain!
The torture-rack when her soft replies
Gave a welcome warm to the passionate sighs
That never were breathed in vain!

Oh, let me die, let me die ere morn!—

Through the dim wood-paths see a shadow glide;
When the chilly East grew crimson with dawn,
And the world awoke, the lady was gone;
They sought her far and wide.

In haste and in fear, for a sudden word
Was spoken among them which froze their blood;
And the sound of hurrying feet was heard,
And wide wild eyes, where a terror stirred,
Gazed into the dark pool's flood.

For wide blank eyes with a glassy stare
Looked up into theirs from amid the nest
Of pale lily-blossoms which starred her hair,
Their serpent stems, round her bosom fair,
Had stifled her into rest.

The water-grasses grew thick and rank,
Where she lay so calm; the marsh-reeds tall
Had woven a veil, which idly sank
O'er her slender limbs, and the sedges dank
Had made her a velvet pall.

* * * * *

And could he marry Eleanor Gray,
With her false blue eyes and her wanton grace,
While his own true love in her beauty lay,
Slain by his falsehood in one short day,
With the murder-brand on her face?

Ay, the deed was done—the bond was tied
That knit his guilt to its curse for life ;
The soft mask fell from his smiling bride,
And a mocking demon stood by his side,
To rend his soul with strife.

No cold calm home—a finger of flame
Wrote Heaven's dark brand on his blighted fate ;
When no heir was born to his ancient name,
When she bartered him and her soul for shame,
And love grew to loathing hate.

'Tis a sad old tale : o'er the uplands dun,
To the place of death where the March winds rave,
A wand'rer, whose race is well-nigh run,
Comes lone and weary at set of sun,
To weep at Isabel's grave.

TEMPLE BAR.

MAY 1861.

The Seven Sons of Mammon.

A STORY.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

CHAPTER XIII.

EMBARRASMENTS OF A RICH YOUNG MAN.

IT is but weary work opening letters; but when every other one or so contains from half a dozen to half a crown's worth of postage-stamps the operation becomes profitable, and the labour may be borne with. Mr. Sims got through his work quite cheerfully, and whistled as he went, not certainly for want of thought, but as a little accompaniment to a pleasant task. Now and then he came upon a letter which contained, not postage-stamps, but a coin carefully stuck in a card or secured under a seal,—now a sixpence, now a shilling, and now actually a half-sovereign; and at the discovery of such a treasure Mr. Sims would shake his head: in a very placable manner, however.

"When *will* the public learn common prudence and caution?" asked Mr. Sims, suspending his whistling, and carefully pocketing a golden effigy of her Majesty, which for greater security had been wrapped up in a piece of soft paper crumpled enough as to texture, and oleaginous enough as to surface to warrant the surmise that it had originally served as a confining locket for the tresses of some unknown Pyrrha. Are the repeated warnings of the Postmaster-General, are the innumerable convictions at the C. C. C., are the pleasing pamphlets of the Ordinary of Newgate—"A Double Rap at the Postman's Conscience," and so forth,—of no avail? It is wicked, it is cruel, to send coin by post. You mus'n't send leeches, and you mus'n't send lucifer-matches, and you mus'n't send sucking-pigs, and you decidedly oughtn't to send money. It places undue temptations in the way of the humble and ill-remunerated postman, and it wears out the letter-boxes. "Besides," he continued, slipping three fourpenny-pieces

into his waistcoat, "money may be marked, may be sent for sinister objects, and may lead to unpleasant revelations concerning one's little business transactions before the stipendiary magistrates. Hum: what have we here?"

No postage-stamps had to be taken out this time. A common, cheap, salmon-coloured envelope being opened, disgorged a piece of coarse sugar-paper, in which were rather crammed than folded at least a dozen halves of what seemed to be five and ten pound notes of the Bank of England. Mr. Sims carefully took account of the numbers of these documents; then as carefully lighted a little taper, walked to the hearth, set the notes on fire, watched them crackle into flame and smoulder into black powder, embossed here and there with "five" and "ten" in gray Gothic, and finally stamped and ground them with his heel into an impalpable smear of dust.

"Plenty more where they come from," he softly remarked, walking back to his letters; "but those half-notes will never find their brothers and sisters, I fancy, nor call out for gum-water."

Mr. Sims had not the slightest appearance of belonging to the nautical profession, nor of having recently assisted in the capture of an enemy's vessel, and so come into the possession of prize-money; and yet what he had just done was suggestive of the old stories current at the Common Hard, Portsmouth, of the brave old days when Jack tars kindled their pipes with bank-notes, or ate them, sandwich fashion, between slices of bread-and-butter. Was he about to fry a gold watch, toss all his loose silver out of window, or paper the ceiling with postage-stamps, next? Not at all; he went on opening letters.

They were all addressed to Coger's Inn, but not by any means were all of them superscribed with Mr. Sims's name. Some were for "Professor Merryscope, Ph. Dr.;" others were for "Abernethy Halford Hunter, M.D.;" others for "Miss de Rosenburg;" others for "Nemo," "Aliquis," "Tamen;" others for nearly every letter in the Greek alphabet, and almost every combination of initials. Some contained, in addition to postage-stamps, and wrapped in more or less greasy scraps of paper, locks of hair,—brown, gray, black, auburn, chestnut, sandy, and fiery red, coarse and fine, curled and straight. Professor Merryscope, Ph. Dr., had to deal with these; and the senders of the stamps and the locks of hair all made urgent requests to be favoured with certain information, mainly relative to love, marriage, and the pursuit of riches, which, it appeared, only Professor Merryscope, when duly provided with postage-stamps, could give. There were people who wrote to Abernethy Halford Hunter, M.D., urgently requesting to be relieved, by return of post and on receipt of stamps, from "nervous fluttering," "unaccountable sensations," "general depression," "dreadful all-overishness," and kindred ailments for which remedies are not to be found in the ordinary pharmacopoeia. Scores of people corresponded with Miss de Rosenburg, enclosing scraps of their handwriting,—villanous scrawls in most cases,—and demanding revelations

concerning their personal characters and future prospects in life. Some were eager with regard to hair-dyes, cosmetics, and "Ninon de l'Enclos' Revivifier," which was warranted (for eighteen postage-stamps) to make people of sixty look younger than youths of sixteen. Denizens of Dorsetshire were anxious to know how they might earn a genteel livelihood by ornamental leather-painting and decorating Chinese lacquer-ware. Correspondents from Sunderland presented their compliments to "Nemo," and were perfectly certain that they were the parties rightly entitled to the 90897. 13s. 4d. unclaimed dividends then lying in the name of Scrookidge in the Bank of England. A confiding party at Bolton-le-Sands was desirous of learning the nature of the desirable investment by which (only eight hundred pounds outlay) a permanent income of five hundred per annum could be secured. Applications for pecuniary loans, accompanied by offers of every kind of security, from landed estates and dock-warrants to pianofortes and silver-spoons, were numerous. But almost every body who wrote either to Professor Merryscope, Ph. Dr., to Miss de Rosenburg, to Abernethy Halford Hunter, M.D., to "Nemo," or "Aliquis," or "Beta," or "Sigma," to "A. B. C." or to "X. Y. Z.," sent postage-stamps or coin of the realm.

"If I could only make my mind up to take post-office orders," thought Mr. Sims, "'Nemo' alone would be worth twenty pounds a week. But I won't. That's an impulse I *can* subdue. Many a man of business has found his bill of indictment in a P.-O. order."

He arranged the letters in different piles methodically, tied up some, filed others. About a dozen or so he burnt. These did not enclose any stamps. The contents, indeed, were generally brief, and not complimentary. "Swindler," wrote one defaulter, "if I didn't live at Berwick-upon-Tweed, I'd hunt you out and kick you." "Villain," a second one had the ill-manners to express himself, "your plausible humbug won't go down with me;" and "Scoundrel" was the coarse commencement of a third; the fourth beginning with the rude apostrophe, "Rascal." One enemy—even Mr. Sims had enemies—mingled a spice of humour with his malice. There was something round, flat, and hard in his letter, which any one might have reasonably conjectured to be either a sixpence or a half-sovereign. On examination it proved to be a farthing, and was encircled by this legend, "Ha, ha! you thought you'd caught me, did you?" Mr. Sims was not at all vexed, nay, seemed somewhat tickled. He burnt the letter, but pocketed the farthing with a smile.

"A droll dog, a very droll dog," he said, whistling between whiles. "After all, it's cash. A pin a day is a groat a year. A farthing put out at interest will make a man as rich as Croesus, if he can only live to the age of Methusaleh. What do I care for their loud words? Let 'em abuse as much as they like. Let 'em come here. If even they get into Coger's Castle, they won't get any thing out of Buffalmacco the Ruthless and Filoe and Co."

He walked to the window and tapped his nail against the dirty pane.

"If one cared to call a charwoman in, and have all this grime cleaned off," he chuckled, "and if there was any thing down there besides cats and sparrows and chimneys, I might pass my leisure-time in seeing the Fools pass. How many hundreds a minute, I wonder?"

His principal work was over, and he had begun to dally with the rest. The letters, tied and taped and filed, he swept into a cupboard and locked up. A special pile which bore either his own name, Sims, Coger's Inn, or that of the mysterious firm of Filoe and Co., he reserved on his table. The silver was all in his pocket. The stamps he had entombed in a drawer. And whenever Mr. Sims opened any thing it was with a key, and he always locked every thing after him. His very trousers and waistcoat pockets seemed ruled by Chubb and Bramah, so tightly did they close.

"I wonder," mused Sims, frugally lunching off the Abernethy biscuit of which he had spoken to Mrs. Armytage, and perhaps in compliment to the illustrious surgeon whose name he had borrowed,— "I wonder who the 'married clergyman' is who advertises for unruly children to tame? I think I could tame 'em at a guinea a lesson. Dear me, even Mr. Van Amburg might have saved himself a good deal of trouble, if he'd brought a Bengal tiger or two to Coger's Inn. Unruly children! Why, Buff could tame a dozen of 'em before breakfast. Hark! he's at it again."

Long quiescence had proved unbearable to Buffalmacco the Ruthless, and emboldened by the interval that had occurred since he was last summoned, he was stamping on the floor and thwacking the office-desk with the broadsword more fiercely than ever.

"Ear me,"—to this effect was Buffalmacco the Ruthless's voice heard through the door,— "'ear me, minions, were yon blue skey a sea of bl-l-ludd, were hevry blade of grass a bleeding corse in my path, I would not falter; no! Saha! slaves of the vile Oppimo, come on!" And the slaves of Oppimo the Vile apparently coming on, in theory, Buffalmacco the Ruthless went at them in practice until the crazy room shook again.

Mr. Sims unlocked his door and called out, "Buff."

"Before you go quite mad, my young friend," he remarked firmly but mildly, "you will oblige me by putting that sword away, and doing something towards earning your wages. Fill up twenty-six characters by handwriting, a dozen Ninon de l'Enclos recipes, and fourteen genteel livelihoods directly; do you hear? You may do a few nervous affections, and futures foretold too, for stock. We're sure to want 'em."

Buffalmacco the Ruthless, who from the fiercest had suddenly become the meekest boy in all Coger's Inn, betook himself to a high stool at the office-desk, from the recesses of which he produced sundry packets of note-paper, partially filled up with lithographed characters in imitation of manuscript, and in ink of various hues.

Mr. Sims went back to his room, and read his own letters, and those destined for Filoe and Co. They were of a very different character to

the previous instalment of his correspondence. There was no question now of paltry postage-stamps, or shillings, or half-sovereigns. Mr. Sims was up to his eyes in thousands. He read of mortgages and post-obits, of deeds and bonds, of bills and promissory notes, of assignments and reversions.

"Lord Rackethorough," he mused inwardly. "Is he good for two-pence-halfpenny yet? Poor old Tenniscourt is very nearly done up. The Southbank has got young Draff Huskisson of the Blues. Good-by to the broad acres at Vealsborough. Can Mrs. Mountain Earsleigh have five thousand on her note of hand? No, she can't. Will I lend Sir Paul Pinder any more on the Wakefield estate? No, I won't. Will I give Mr. Fishton Shiftleigh time, because he's got neuralgia and has lately lost his aunt? No, I won't. What have I to do with his neuralgia? Hang his neuralgia. Why didn't his aunt leave him money enough to take up his bills with? Now then, Buff, what is it?"

Buff had knocked at the door. When his master opened it, he handed him a card. Mr. Sims looked at it, and said curtly, "Show him in." He flung his door wide open, sat down before his great leathern-covered table,—there was not a letter or a vestige of created paper on it now, all had been spirited away with pantomimic rapidity,—thrust his hands into his pockets, and looked prepared for any thing.

He was quite prepared for his visitor, who turned out to be Sir Jasper Goldthorpe, neat and spotless as to outward appearance as ever, but very pale and careworn, and bowed; not at all the man he was at Christmas Eighteen hundred and fifty.

Mr. Sims scanned him narrowly under his lids. "He outran me bravely he thought, but I have caught him up. Aha! I have caught him up."

It might have been long illness and long mental suffering, but Sir Jasper, before whom all men were wont to tremble, seemed quite meek and humble—almost cowed, to tell the truth, before the mean little man with the gray head and the purple nose.

"Shall I close the door?" the baronet asked.

"No," returned Mr. Sims shortly, and almost snappishly.

"I had better," Sir Jasper softly urged.

"No," repeated the other. "The boy is deaf and blind, save when I tell it."

"DESBOROUGH!" cried Jasper appealingly.

"Hay!" exclaimed Mr. Sims. "What's that? You've made a mistake. Buff," he continued, rising, and calling to the ruthless clerk, "the gentleman's come to the wrong chambers. There's no Mr. Desborough here. These are Filoe and Co.'s offices."

But Buffalmacco the Ruthless continued filling up the lithographed papers, as though he had been in good sooth as deaf as his master had declared him to be.

"Show the gentleman out," Mr. Sims went on.

But Buffalmacco the Ruthless being blind as well as deaf for the nonce, didn't see the gentleman, and never turned his red head.

"Desborough, Mr. Desborough!" Sir Jasper broke in, catching the little man by his garment. "For Heaven's sake hear me. I conjure, I entreat you. Here, let me shut the door."

Mr. Sims made a faint show of resistance, but eventually suffered the rich man to do as he asked. He who had always been accustomed to have doors—golden doors, too—opened and shut for him; he who could raise the rate of discount by a nod, and make money tight in the City by crooking his little finger!

Mr. Sims sat down as before in his chair, his hands in his pockets and his lips close set.

"Once more, you will hear me, Des—," the baronet was beginning.

"Don't know the party," broke in Mr. Sims: "he's dead. Dead and gone years ago. There used to be a Mr. Sims here, but he's gone away. He went off to Australia by the Black Ball line of packets last January twelvemonth, and is supposed to have been lost in the bush, and eaten up by Bungaree, King of the Blacks."

"What am I to call you, then? But, for mercy's sake, hear me."

"Say Filoe and Co., and I'll listen to you. I'm Filoe, and the boy in the next room's the Co."

"I should know the name well enough," Sir Jasper retorted, with a transient touch of his old haughtiness. "Much stamped paper bearing that endorsement has passed through my hands."

"Curiously," replied Mr. Sims *alias* Filoe, "I've a quantity of it myself accepted by one Captain William Goldthorpe, of whom you may know something, and which I'm going to endorse this afternoon to a friend of mine in the City."

The baronet bit his lips. "I am no stranger to my son's embarrassments," he said. "Munificent as his allowance has always been, I know that he has exceeded it, and that he has plunged into a vortex of profligate expenditure."

"Do you know that he bets?" Mr. Sims asked calmly.

"I have heard so."

"Do you know that he gambles?"

"I fear that he has become addicted to the unhappy passion of play."

Mr. Sims might have winced a little, but he did not; he only sneered.

"Mere paralysis in the elbow," he said. "There used to be a Mr. Desborough who was afflicted with that complaint, and died. Do you know that the captain's up to the eyes in all manner of wickedness that costs money, and that next Wednesday is the Derby day, and that he has backed Orcus,—as if that three-legged brute could ever get round Tattenham corner,—and that he stands to lose twenty thousand?"

Sir Jasper slightly groaned, and hid his face in his handkerchief.

"You were always an old humbug," Mr. Sims remarked contemptuously: it was Belphegor bearding Mammon. "You knew very well that

he was deep in Filoe and Co.'s books, only you weren't quite aware of the fact that I was Filoe. Why couldn't you look at the name over the door when you came hunting for dead men, you old stupid?"

It was a peculiarity of Mr. Sims, when he used harsh words, never to make them audible in a harsh voice. As he upbraided Mrs. Armytage, so he upbraided Sir Jasper Goldthorpe; and the tone of his last speech had been quite mellifluous.

"It was not on his account, I called upon you," Sir Jasper answered, with an unquiet look towards his tormentor.

"Of course it wasn't, it was on your own; but, if you've no objection, I will settle the captain's business first. He owes me thirty-seven hundred pounds. Are you going to pay me, here and now, or am I to look up Sir Jasper Goldthorpe's son in Cursitor Street?"

"I would do all I could to satisfy the claims against him, but I fear that he has other liabilities."

"Others! By that I suppose you mean that there are more Filoes and Co. than one. I dare say twenty thousand wouldn't cover the paper he has out, let alone the nice little nest-egg he's laid for the Derby. There's scarcely a bill-discounter in London who hasn't got his precious autograph. They think he's pretty safe, knowing what his father seems to be, but not knowing what he really is so well as I do. And yet I don't know any thing, do I, Sir Jasper? But I'll tell you what: our people are getting shy even of the son of such a rich man as Sir Jasper Goldthorpe. He's but a younger son, you know, after all. One off the title; might have been two but for that accident."

Sir Jasper groaned again.

"Yes," the merciful Sims continued, "I dare say you do feel that. Terrible drop it was, to be sure. How are the mighty fallen! and the rest of it. Dreadful blow to Miss Hill too, whom our little lady yonder is so fond of. But, mark my words, Sir J., young Hopeful's creditors will sell him up, and that in two twos. Not but what they'll lend him plenty more money by and by; but they want to see what he's made of, and how far his governor will shell out. As to his betting-book, you'll have to pay that on the nail, if Orcus goes to the bad. That's a case of-must. Captain Goldthorpe can't be a defaulter."

"Is there no compromising his imprudent wagers?"

"There's very little compromising done on the south side of St. George's Hospital, Hyde Park Corner. Hungry and sharp's the word, and if there's any meat on him, they'll have it. You'll get much more quarter at the hands of our people. The Jews will take any thing so long as it's double the amount they originally advanced. It's only Christians that go in for two hundred and fifty per cent. But even they'll compromise, if you stick out and threaten sale of commission, Insolvent Court, cutting off with a shilling, and so on. Take Filoe and Co. for instance. I'm not unreasonable, any more than the Co., who has ten shillings a week, paid every Saturday at two p.m. We're open to an

offer, we're to be squared. The captain owes us thirty-seven hundred pounds. Give us a cheque for three thousand, and we'll cry quits."

"And how much actual money has the wretched boy had at usurious interest?"

"If by usurious interest at sixty per cent, and the renewals and *et ceteras*, which, after you've paid the original debt, always leave you more in debt than you were before, you mean 'actual money,' I dare say the captain's had a cool fifteen hundred pounds, and that's liberal. All hard cash, mind. I never give wine or pictures, or any of that sort of trumpery."

"I will give you a cheque for two thousand five hundred pounds to-morrow."

"Won't do," Mr. Sims calmly returned. "When Filoe and Co. make an offer, F. and Company never depart from it. The Co. in the next room wouldn't abate a sixpence for half a week's salary. Say, when will you send us the cheque?"

"You shall have the money, if it be imperatively necessary. A letter enclosing it shall be left by any messenger you choose to send after ten o'clock to-morrow morning. But there are other liabilities. Money is much in demand, and is very hard to get just now."

"That speech from Sir Jasper Goldthorpe," Mr. Sims exclaimed, in graceful raillery,—"those words from a gentleman who coins gold, who eats, drinks, and sleeps upon money-bags! Bah! you are jesting."

"I am not indeed. The operations of our house are tremendous, but they are equalled by the calls made upon us."

"There, that will do. And how about the surplus? But we won't be hard upon you. Our cheque we must have, because we want it; but Filoe and Co. will undertake to satisfy all outstanding calls against young Hopeful, and get in all the stamped paper from all the tribes of Israel, lost ones and all, for ten shillings in the pound paid down."

"If I accede to this, will you do me one favour?"

"What is it?"

"Not to lend William any more money."

"Yes," replied Mr. Sims, very slowly and drily. "I think I can promise that the captain won't get another shilling from Filoe and Co. until we see our way a great deal more clearly. Do you know, Sir Jasper Goldthorpe, that I'm not quite so well satisfied with the security as I was an hour ago? I begin to be of your opinion that money is much in demand and very hard to get; and that although the operations of your house are tremendous, they are equalled by the calls made upon it. Is there any tangible surplus, Sir J.?" The richest man in London moved uneasily in his chair, and a faint flush overspread his pallid cheek.

"You shall have your cheque," he said with an effort, "and I will give you authority to compound with my son's creditors."

"I ask you 'eye,' and you answer 'elbow,'" Mr. Sims continued. "But let that pass. We have settled the captain's little business, and relieved Filoe and Co. from the painful necessity of issuing twenty-eight Victorias

by the grace of, at two pounds fourteen each, commanding William Goldthorpe to put in an appearance before Fred. Pollock at Westminster. Now about your own concerns. May I ask to what I am indebted for the pleasure of *et cetera*, *et cetera*, *et cetera*, and how the deuce you came to stumble across me and Coger's Inn?"

"She sent me here."

"Clever little minx, I dare say she did. And what was I to do?"

"In an interview I had with her only yesterday, I begged, I implored, I almost went on my knees to her to name a sum for which she would consent to resign those fatal papers."

"What fatal papers?"

"Oh, Desborough, Desborough, you know too well."

"Upon my word, Sir Jasper Goldthorpe, I don't; and I can't see what any papers, fatal or otherwise, have to do with your visit to me."

"She said that she could do nothing without your sanction. She implied that you were a participator in the secret which is the curse and agony of my life. She resisted my entreaties, my supplications, my offers, always on the plea of being unable to act without you. And finally, saying that you might prove tractable, she bade me come to you, and told me where to find you."

"I declare that were you to give me fifty thousand pounds, I couldn't help you," Sims replied, with a very disturbed and puzzled expression of countenance. "It seems to me that she has been making fools of both of us. She was always good at lying," muttered Mr. Filoe Sims to himself, "and this is decidedly an elephantine lie. I'm too fond of money," he continued to the baronet, "to refuse a good offer if I've any thing to sell; but I don't happen to be in partnership with Mrs. A. in this particular instance."

He was speaking with perfect frankness. Mr. Sims never told untruths when mendacity was unnecessary. Mrs. Armytage lied from predilection. There are some people who will lie about the day of the week and the time of the day. Sims had taken a comprehensive view of the situation. He saw there was nothing to be gained by deceiving Sir Jasper Goldthorpe on this point, and was for that reason quite candid and truthful.

"Then, you know nothing," the baronet asked, but not in a relieved tone, as though he would rather have been in the power of Mr. Sims than in that of Mrs. Armytage.

"Nothing beyond a general impression that our lively little friend has a hold over you, by which she manages to extract about two thousand a year from Beryl Court. Do you receive her rents for her, or are you the agent for her late husband's pension?"

Sir Jasper moved towards the door.

"I must try again," he murmured. "The continuance of this thralldom will either kill or drive me mad."

"Nay," said Mr. Sims, "though I know nothing at present, there is

no reason why I shouldn't screw all that is to be known out of our captivating acquaintance. If she has a hold over you, I have a hold over her."

"And I one, and no light hold, over you, Desborough," Sir Jasper interposed in a low, sad voice.

"And so we all hold, and may all hang together," gaily responded Mr. Sims; with a short dry laugh, and positively snapping his fingers. "A hold over me, bah! I defy you. Not all the oaths of all the witnesses, true and perjured, in the world, could make me out to be Hugh Desborough. To those I choose I am Sims, to others Filoe. I may call myself Sardanapalus, or Tippoo Saib, if I like; but Hugh Desborough I never can and never will be. He is a dead man, dead and buried, and I have come into his property."

Sir Jasper Goldthorpe looked at this mean, gray, ill-favoured little man, with his rogue's face and shabby raiment, and his thoughts rolled back long years. He was among the twenties, and saw himself humble and struggling behind a country-shop counter, his wife in the back parlour nursing their first baby boy. He saw the man, who, in despite of truth and knowledge, he was to call Filoe, not Desborough, young, natty, spruce, rosy—a jaunty little man in a white hat, blue coat, yellow waistcoat, stocking-net pantaloons, and Hessian boots—a merry little man fond of his bottle of port, his rubber of whist, and his Anacreontic song, which he piped in a chirping voice when business-hours were over. Yes, there was the shop; his little boy playing with the brooms, and brushes, and fagots of wood at the door. His wife in the back parlour nursing a baby. He saw, in the lazy summer afternoon, the jaunty little man coming across the high street. His blue shadow fell across the threshold. Anon he was in the shop, and spoke him cheeringly but decisively. For the little man was his superior, and had authority over him. There was a talk about a lottery-ticket. Six of "thirty thousand pounds," "the last lottery ever to be drawn." "Bish, contractor," jangled in his ears like chimes. And the little man changed; ah, how he changed! and he saw himself change no less. He was on a jury. The little man, in soiled and sordid raiment, stood in a wooden pen in a hot crowded room; an inverted mirror over his head, a man with keys behind, rue on the ledge before him. Guilty, Death. It was a banker's prosecution—a private banker's, a Quaker firm, luckily. The quiet Friends were always averse to capital punishment. "Guilty, Death;" and he saw a ship slowly working out of dock, the men at the capstan crooning forth their dull song, the soldier with his bright bayonet standing over the hatchway where the exiles lay fettered. Hugh Desborough was dead indeed. His name was written in the midst of the great Pacific wave, and a great golden rock rolled across Sir Jasper Goldthorpe's field of vision, and left him face to face with Filoe and Co. composedly grinning.

"There is nothing more," Sir Jasper said, with a deep, deep sigh.

"But one word." Mr. Sims placed himself in front of Mammon. He had the audacity to take him by the lapels of that revered frock-coat, to

look him full in the eyes, to draw him towards as much light as would pass through the murky window-pane.

"See here," said Mr. Sims, very softly, almost kindly. "We are very old acquaintances, and have each seen our ups and downs, though business makes a gulf between us as wide as Chelsea Reach. Is all right with you? Is Beryl Court really built of gold, or is it only straw and stamped paper? Be frank. You are the most specious, but yet the duller rascal of the two. You may deceive yourself. I never do, save when I back the red or take the box in my hand. Are you going to the bad?"

"The reputation of my house," Sir Jasper began, in his grave plodding voice.

"May become so much infamy to-morrow. If you were to lay me down fifty thousand pounds in gold on that table, you might be still on the very eve of a Smash. I can understand when a man's head gets muddled with millions. If you are ruined, of course the ruin will be of the most splendid description. Come, speak out."

The Baronet looked round for his hat, and muttered something about a cheque awaiting the pleasure of Filoe and Co.

"I suppose I must let you go your own gate," observed Mr. Sims, releasing his hold on Sir Jasper's lapels, and thrusting his hands into his pocket again. "We have touched for a moment, and must now fly asunder farther than ever. Don't come here any more. It won't do you any good. It may be part of my subsequent duty to assist in smashing you. Keep your promise to Filoe and Co., and they'll let you be; if not, they will be compelled to do you a mischief."

"You will remember old times, Des— Filoe."

"I shall remember nothing," Mr. Sims tartly replied, "but business. Let us trust that our mutual business transactions won't bring us into collision. I say again, that Desborough is dead, and that the ghosts of Townsend or Ruthven, the Bow-Street runners, couldn't identify him. Go, and return no more. If you had spoken to me frankly, I might have forgotten the wrong you once did me, and helped you. I have no means of judging, but I can swear you need help."

"I do indeed, in one instance—that of the woman who tortures me."

"What of little Florence, little Flo? She is useful to me; but you have still my full leave to poison her, or have her kidnapped and locked up in a coal-cellar for life. I shall be obliged to do something of the same sort myself; for, do you know, my good sir, her impulse makes her dangerous."

He laid his hand on the door, and was about to open it.

"Remember," he said, "you are doing wrong. This is the last time of asking. As you knew me once, I am now—a common swindler and cheat. But I have means, aha! I have means. The mouse might help the lion. Coger's Inn might come to the aid of Beryl Court with benefit to both parties. Once more, have you any thing to say?"

"Nothing, nothing," Sir Jasper, falteringly made answer; and he was given over to Buffalmacco the Ruthless, and conducted out of Coger's Castle.

"Go," said Mr. Sims, apostrophising a cupboard in default of his late visitor. "Go to your clerks, your slaves, and your toadies; go, till the smash comes. What a smash it will be! I might have disentangled the web. I should like to be the bosom-friend at Beryl Court. But its too late, evidently; and he's far too deeply dipped. This makes the second of my acquaintances who have Smash written in their way-bills. The little woman must go. There is no help for it. Her impulse grows stronger and stronger."

He became aware of the presence of a fragment of biscuit on the window-sill, and, pouncing upon it, devoured it with great gusto.

"She's an artful little hussy, too," he thought, still munching. "She's moved that heavy, senseless, spooney lubber away from Hoogen-dracht. Yes; the Lay Brother went away on the 10th of May. Next Wednesday is the 24th. She thought to spirit him away from her Sims; and here's a letter telling me that he's safe and sound at Belleriport. A *garde-chiourme*, aha! a *garde-chiourme*. She doesn't give parties in the Rue Neuve for nothing. Her influence with the maritime Prefect must be enormous. The *chiourme* too. How fond she is of the old locality! Memory will bring back the feeling. *Mon enfant, tu finiras là, où tu as commencée.*"

May I be permitted to observe, that people who have passed many years of their lives in a foreign country, thoroughly isolated from the companionship of their own countrymen, frequently express their thoughts in the language which they have been accustomed to hear spoken.

"Buff," said Mr. Sims, passing into the adjoining room, "here are five sovereigns to pay for the usual postages and advertisements. Twelve more insertions, on alternate days, for Professor Merryscope, if you please. I shall not be here to-morrow. And now," continued Mr. Sims, "I'll go and enjoy myself."

Mr. Sims's curriculum of enjoyment was peculiar. He took a walk up Regent Street, and passed into Piccadilly by the Burlington Arcade, peering into a variety of shops for the display of fashionable wares, and chuckling to think how many bills of sale he held over those gay stocks-in-trade, and how many of the dashing proprietors, male and female, he had under the thumbscrew. Then he took a little walk in Hyde Park, and looked at the distinguished personages on foot, on horseback, and in heraldry-covered carriages, who owed Filoe and Co. money. Then he had a nice little dinner at a sixpenny eating-house; and then, after a quiet tumbler at a tavern, of which the landlord was obsequiously polite to the customer who held his lease, his life-policy, and his dock-warrants, Mr. Sims thought that he would go to the play. He had paid his gold into a bank, and had a pocketful of silver. He came back from the play about three o'clock in the morning, very haggard, with blood-

shot eyes, and with very nearly three hundred pounds in gold and notes about him.

"What's the good?" he muttered, turning into a wretched bed at a coffee-shop in Long Acre—he seldom slept twice in the same place. "I lost a thousand the night before last."

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. ARMYTAGE'S IMPULSE.

DEAR ladies, who are good enough to read this story, don't you think that there is a great deal too much about money and not half enough about love in its pages? There has not been, positively, a scene of downright honest sweethearting in one single chapter. Is it possible for that wicked and most objectionable little person, Mrs. Armytage, to love any one? Besides, who is the *prétendu*, whom the *soupirant*? What man has been fortunate or unhappy enough to find a place in that cankered heart, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked? There is Miss Magdalen Hill, too. She is rich, she is accomplished, she is pious; and she loses one lover in a railway-accident, and has another, a clergyman too, almost turned out of doors. And that rude hoiden, Miss Letitia Salusbury, is *she* susceptible of the soft passion? When is the real love-making going to begin? you may ask, ladies. Why, even a little servants'-hall *tendresse*, between Sir Jasper Goldthorpe's fifth footman and the scullery-maid in Onyx Square, might alleviate the intolerable dreariness of this history of money-bags, bills for discount, postage-stamps, cheques, bank-notes, and naughty people who live in ugly places and lend money at sixty per cent. Ladies, you must be just. If you want love-making novels, Mr. Mudie will pile up your carriage-cushions with any amount of three-volume sentimentality. If you require theological novels about High Church, Low Church, Broad Church, or no Church at all, the circulating libraries and the railway book-stalls will meet your every wish. How am I to write about love, of which I know nothing, and never did know aught that would bear the dwelling upon? You seek the placid lake, the green boughs, the birds singing in the calm sky of Love. I have been far out to sea, and can only discourse of howling waves and inky clouds, of jagged rocks and drifting spars of wrecks, of storm-birds hovering over the foam, and bunches of tangled seaweed floating Heaven knows whither. This story is not about the Seven Sons of Venus, could Cupid so multiply himself. It is called the Seven Sons of Mammon. It treats of the low and squalid, the sordid and the base, of dross-getting and dross-spending; it tells of the good and evil that by money may be wrought. I asked in the outset if gold were a chimera, and denied the postulate. For gold gives us power and scorn, and the accomplishment of desire, and the working-out of long-nursed hatreds and revenges; and by gold in Mammon and Mammon in gold this book must stand or fall.

And you, good gentlemen, have you not a crow to pluck with me, for that I have but as yet introduced you to three of Mammon's seven sons? One of them dead and buried, too, at Kensal Green. Have patience: let the months and years roll on. There is time enough for the sailor to come home from sea, for the Eton boy to grow up to man's estate, for his two brothers to make themselves a place in our story. There is time enough for the very dead to—but enough: I must attend to the affairs of the living.

Mrs. Armytage, for instance, was as lively as the liveliest of kittens, when, the cheque of Filoe and Co. in her porte-monnaie, she trotted down the crazy stairs of Coger's Inn. She was an ephemeral creature. She hoped and feared, sorrowed and joyed, but for the moment. She was an April in flounces and crinoline, and the sunshine far predominated over the showers. When a storm did come, it was short, but sharp.

In the shameful old courtyard of Coger's Inn her brougham was waiting. Somebody else was in waiting, too, being no other than Mr. Tigg's man, who—being well aware of the ins and outs of Coger's Inn, and so well persuaded that, unless Mrs. Armytage threw herself out of a window, or took up her permanent abode in one of the sets of chambers, she must necessarily come out by the same door by which she had entered—was basking in the sun, which made him look very dusty, and lit up his greasy hat and coat-collar with golden flakes. He had been amusing himself by chewing the end of a lucifer-match with great apparent relish. Mr. Tigg's man was youthful and a highly disagreeable young man he was, both to sight and to smell, to say nothing of hearing. Why his hat was much too large for him, and was worn at the back of his head; why his coat was too long, and his trousers too short, and his boots too big; why he should dangle one hideous Berlin glove, which, in antediluvian times, may have been white, and which had not the remotest reference to a fellow; why he should have strings and pins where buttons should have been; why no vestige of under-linen should have been perceptible about him, save and except only one striped sock, which flapped idly over one unlaced high-low; why his blue-cotton pocket-handkerchief should have been deposited in his hat, allowing one small triangle of clouded cerulean to brand his pasty brow; why the mud, seemingly of last summer, should have encrusted his lower extremities, while the grease of the year before last slashed his jerkin and pinked his sleeves, and the patches of perhaps the last century spotted him over, as though he had made his coat from a particoloured counterpane, or had been a harlequin, fallen upon evil days and into a gutter;—all these were matters between the young man, his tailor, and his conscience. His chewing the ends of lucifer-matches might likewise be looked upon as an idiosyncrasy. The continual blinking of his lashless eyelids, and the occasional spasmodic twitch of his limbs, which gave him the appearance of a clumsy pupil in St. Vitus's school, who had failed even to master his Dance to perfection, might be put down as natural infirmities. Nor could he help his large ears, his wide and idiotically simper-

ing mouth, his beardless chin and cheeks, his scant hair, which had been apparently half singed off, while the other moiety had been cut with a knife and fork, and his many pimples. But he was a slovenly young man, for soap and water are cheap: there was even a pump in Coger's Inn, and washing would have done him no harm, and made his purse none the leaner. And he was an inconsistent young man; for while in the aggregate he looked like a beggar, he quite dissipated any notion of pauperism that may have been formed respecting him, first by wearing in his foul old stock a diamond brooch of great brilliance, and next by allowing a golden chain, of massive form and curious workmanship, to meander over the breast of his exceedingly ragged waistcoat. This young man might have been about twenty-three years of age. There hung about him a mingled and decidedly unpleasant odour, in which a chandler's shop, a tobacconist's, and a tap-room contended for preëminence; and he had a voice which reminded you at once of a person naturally gruff, and with a cold in his head besides, whispering down a gutta-percha tube. The young man's name was Reuben.

"A pretty cavalier, upon my word, to ride with," quoth Mrs. Armytage, shaking her sunny ringlets. "And that diamond must be worth a hundred and fifty pounds, if it's worth a penny. If you please, sir," she continued, —as a pleasant compromise between "wretch" and "fellow,"—"every thing is settled, and we will go back to Mr. Tigg's, if you please."

"Ham Hi," asked the young man, "to go hinside, or ham Hi to go hout? Thof a follerer, Hi ham a gent, and 'av moved among the very fust."

The fact is, that the young man had ridden all the way from Stockwell on the box of the brougham, and the driver had in no qualified terms imparted to him his opinion that pumping on first, and rubbing down with a bath-brick afterwards, were about the best remedies for his complaint.

"Hi ham respected," continued the young man, evidently much hurt in his feelings, "hin the 'all an' hin the robin' room. Hi ham well known at jidge's chambers. Ham Hi to go hinside, or ham Hi to go hout?"

If the young man's face had not been of the precise hue of cold boiled veal, it might have been likened to sitchbone of beef, so full of h's in the wrong place was he.

Mrs. Armytage was in an excellent temper. "You had better get inside, I think," she said. "I'm sure I didn't mean to offend you. Will you drive back to the same place, if you please?" she added to the coachman.

"I'm glad it's inside this time," grumbled the charioteer; "I'll be danged if I drive over Westminster Bridge again with that scarecrow by the side of me." The brougham was only a hired one; and the man thought, it may be presumed, that he had a right to be impertinent.

"If you would be kind enough, sir," suggested Mrs. Armytage, "to sit as far away on that side"—indicating the one opposite to her—"as

you can; and if you'd just pull the window down; and,—yes, thank you, if you wouldn't mind my—it's so very refreshing this warm weather."

On hearing the two magic syllables "refresh," the dull eye of the young man brightened up, and he grinned fawningly. But on the word terminating with "ing" instead of "ment," the eye subsided into fishy gloom, and the young man's mouth relapsed into its normal expression of hopeless vacancy; while Mrs. Armytage proceeded to sprinkle herself with eau de Cologne.

"May I ask," the conversational little lady proceeded, with unabated politeness, "how you employ yourself generally?"

"Hi follers 'em habout," was the reply of the young man.

"Whom did you say you were good enough to follow?"

"Father's customers. Them has e's down hupon, sich has you; and Hi follers them as as to be took."

"Took?"

"Capture. Middlesex and Surrey to wit. Capias," explained the young man, with as many nods as words. "Hi follers; and hif they means boltin', Hi 'angs hon. Hi oughter for to take myself. Hi oughter, but Hi aint lucky. Father says Hi'm a fool."

"I wish your papa would get a new tailor for you, and wouldn't let you smoke such strong tobacco," thought Mrs. Armytage.

"Hi oughter," continued the young man, a deep sense of injury in his tone, "to be 'igh hup in the lor. Hif not a hoffer, han attorney. My brother's one, and lives hin Gray's Hinn. 'E's a swell, and Hi'm holder than 'im, but Hi'm honly Mr. Tigg's little boy."

"Dear me," murmured Mrs. Armytage sympathisingly, and gazing at the victim of parental partiality through her eye-glass.

"Hits cos Hi haint a scoller," proceeded the aggrieved young man. "Hi wenter school, and Hi couldn't fix the words. The master 'ammered me and Hi 'owled. The more Hi 'owled, the more 'e 'ammered me. Hit was 'ammerin and 'owlin, 'owlin and 'ammerin all day long; but Hi never could fix them words; and Hi'm honly good forter serve writs, and swear affidavitches, and foller parties habout."

He sank into moody silence after this affecting narrative, and chewed the cud of sweet and bitter fancies—and another lucifer-match—during the remainder of the journey.

Mrs. Armytage thought of a thousand things;—of some that made her eyes glisten, of others that darkened her fair face, and stamped a tiny little horseshoe—but only for a moment—between her brows. And ever and anon she opened her porte-monnaie, and glanced triumphantly at a little bit of gray paper that lay neatly folded in a compartment by itself; and if, graceless little body, she could invoke a blessing upon any thing, she must have blessed her lucky stars at the sight of that same gray paper.

The residence of Mr. Ephraim Tigg was in Badger Lane, a portion of the charming suburb of Stockwell which has not yet become susceptible to the influence of metropolitan improvements. On a mouldy zinc plate,

from whose sunken letters the black annealing had cracked away, Mr. Tigg called himself an auctioneer, estate-agent, appraiser, and upholder. Those who were familiar with the business he carried on might have opined that casting down was much more his province than holding up; but, at any rate, it would have been more consistent with the announcement on his door-plate if Mr. Tigg had occupied himself a little with upholding his own residence, which was of the craziest and most dilapidated appearance. The nucleus of this tenement had, to all seeming, been originally a showman's van; the wheels being removed to insure a firm foundation. This *corps de logis* had two wings, one in the guise of a washhouse, and the other in that of a parochial cage in a country town. Behind, something like a ruined brick-kiln struggled for architectural ascendancy with a barn. Before the place, stretched by way of lawn a model, on a diminutive scale, of the great Desert of Sahara, with one oasis in the shape of a boot, much worn, which had perhaps slipped from some angry wayfarer, who had shaken the dust off his feet on leaving Mr. Tigg's premises. The whole was fenced about with rusty spear-headed rails, pointing in various directions, as though the sheriff of Surrey had buried a posse of javelinmen beneath, and their imprisoned ghosts were piercing the earth with lethal weapons. There were plenty of flower-pots about, likewise saucers, generally broken; and a plentiful supply of mould, but not any flowers. The place was called Paradise Cottage. This name was displayed on a black board gibbeted between two poles, looking very much like one that had served for conveyance of announcements that rubbish might here be shot. The satirical artists among the neighbouring youth had also made it a medium for the display of cartoons in chalk, representing a personage of monstrous mien, presumed the proprietor of Paradise Cottage, suspended from a gallows, and smoking a pipe meanwhile. He was likewise shown as selling himself for a bag labelled "2s. 6d." to a dreadful creature with horns, hoofs, and a tail, and who might reasonably be supposed to be the Enemy of Mankind. These drawings were accompanied by insulting legends, generally assuming an interrogative form, and inquiring whether Mr. Tigg was the person who skinned the flea for the hide and fat, and who made beef-tea out of paving-stones.

Badger Lane did not seem precisely the locality for carriages; but as Mrs. Armytage's brougham drove towards Paradise Cottage, the way was found to be stopped by a very splendid mail phaeton, with two very splendid and champing gray horses, splendidly harnessed. The fittings of the vehicle—silver-mounted lamps, tiger-skin rugs, morocco cushions—were on an equal scale of splendour; and behind was a solemn groom in a blue-and-silver livery, who sat with his arms folded, mute and contemplative, as though he were twin-brother to the Emperor Napoleon, brought by the exigencies of fortune down to the service of a livery-stable, instead of St. Helena.

The proprietor of all this splendour was absolutely sumptuous. He

stood in the midst of the Desert of Sahara talking to Mr. Tigg. He was a fat gentleman; and with his vast abdomen and pursy cheeks, but sallow complexion, and black beard and ringlets, quite fulfilled the idea of an *Ariental Alderman*. He glittered very much with chains, rings, and brooches, and he had a very large cigar, at which he drew with such vigour and persistence, that you might have thought it was his slave, and that he was determined to have a good day's work out of it. And the fat gentleman had very yellow gloves, and smelt very strongly of musk.

"You won't, then, you won't come to terms," the fat gentleman said, loud enough for Mrs. Armytage to hear, as, finding the narrow lane blocked, she cheerfully descended from her brougham; "you won't take nineteen and sevenpence in the pound! You're wrong, Mr. Tigg; upon my life and word and honour, now, you're wrong indeed."

"I wouldn't take nineteen and ninepence—I wouldn't take nineteen and elevenpence three-farthings—there!" Mr. Tigg made answer.

"Then you're wrong," pursued the fat gentleman; "you're wrong, my dear friend; bless you, and good-by. Bless you—." He was forced to make his sentences short, the cigar entailing much expenditure of respiration. "When will you come and dine?"

"I never come and dine," replied Mr. Tigg.

"Come and dine in the Regency Park. Why don't you live in the Regency Park, instead of in this mousetrap?"

"We have all our different ways of enjoying life," Mr. Tigg observed sententiously.

"Truly so, truly so, my dear friend," went on the fat gentleman, still puffing. "I like to enjoy myself. You like to live in a dog-kennel. Good-by, and bless you. Stop," he said, as though a novel idea had struck him, "perhaps you prefer to lock up in Surrey?"

"Maybe."

"Ah, there's something in that—something in that. By the way, will you go halves in another five hundred at three months for young Goldthorpe?"

"Hush!" cried Mr. Tigg; "don't mention names out of doors. Don't you see there's somebody coming?"

He pointed to Mrs. Armytage and the young man Reuben, who were just then at the hingeless gate which gave entrance to the great Desert of Sahara.

The fat and splendid gentleman glanced over his shoulder, and took instantaneous stock of the new arrival. Badger Lane was scarcely an appropriate place wherein to discuss the merits of the lyric drama, but he immediately began to talk about the Italian Opera. He mentioned *Persiani* at once, and took leave of Mr. Tigg with a reference to the *Sonnambula*. He could not shake hands with Mr. Tigg, however; for the sufficient reason that his host leaned habitually on two crutch-sticks; but he blessed him a great many times, and, removing the cigar from his lips to hum an air from *Norma*, mounted into his chariot of state. The

brougham had backed out of Badger Lane, and the fat gentleman in his mail phaeton had it all his own way.

"Where have I met that woman before?" he said reflectively, as he drove into the high-road. "One doesn't see that grin and those curls twice in a life."

Mr. Tigg was delighted to see Mrs. Armytage, and in his joy positively gave his boy Reuben a shilling. It is remarkable that a very few minutes afterwards the pungent odour of the very strongest tobacco pervaded the dwelling of Mr. Tigg. Nature is, after all, but an aggregate of systems of compensation; and while Ephraim Tigg hardened his heart with usury, his son Reuben softened his brain with coarse tobacco and a short pipe.

The fumes of this calumet made Mrs. Armytage cough a little even in the kitchen, where she sat with Mr. Tigg. For it was on the basement floor, and in the apartment ordinarily devoted to culinary purposes, that the Stockwell Rasper elected to dwell. A lean and hungry cat with admirably defined ribs kept him company, while the young man Reuben smoked his pipe above stairs, until required to follow people about. The furniture of Mr. Tigg's kitchen was eccentric. There were plenty of dish-covers, but no dishes, and not a scrap of any thing eatable to put in them, if dishes there had been. The place of a larder was supplied by a very large iron safe, and that of a dresser by a nest of drawers and pigeon-holes. The huge hobs of the kitchen-range were covered with a neat assortment of ink-bottles past service, and the open oven and plate-warmer appeared to contain newspapers. A common kitchen-table was littered with files of documents. A hanging shelf contained Mr. Tigg's library, to wit, a Post-Office Directory, a Peerage and Baronetage, an Army List, a Navy List, a Clergy List, a Law List, and a Racing Calendar,—all books essential to the due carrying on of Mr. Tigg's vocation. Remote as was his residence from the abodes of wealth and the haunts of fashion, peers, baronets, members of the House of Commons, officers of the household cavalry and of her Majesty's navy, sages of the law, and dignitaries of the Church, had travelled to Stockwell, and sat in that squalid kitchen, and sometimes trembled before its master, as they vainly pleaded for "time." For when the mountain lends money, and Mahomet wants money, he must needs go to the mountain.

Regarding Mr. Ephraim Tigg itself, it may be a tenable theory to assume that this eminent Rasper chose to live in a kitchen, either through a fellow feeling for the rats which infested it, or else in salutary memory that it was somewhat nearer to that grave to which he seemed destined at no distant date to descend. Whether he had attained the age of one hundred years, or was a few years short of the century, must remain a moot-point. On the principle of extremes meeting, he was a very Hercules of infirmities. His head was quite bald; and, more for use than ornament, there was perched on the crown thereof a black skull-cap of thread-

bare cotton velvet. The wags of his craft declared that he had lost all his teeth in gnawing up a certain great bankrupt's estate in the year 1825. He was slightly paralytic one side of his face, and in one arm, and so lurched at you when he lent you money, or sued you for the triple of that which he had lent. His legs and feet were thickly bandaged up; so were his hands, much afflicted with chalkstones. He walked, or hobbled, or limped, or lurched, as has been before mentioned, by the aid of two crutch-sticks. He wore a filthy, old, gray flannel dressing-gown, closely buttoned up. A yellow string that hung down from his throat, and belonging probably to his night-shirt, and a pair of misshapen slippers that had once been of red leather, marked what remaining sacrifices he had made to the Graces.

Mrs. Armytage knew his person and his peculiarities by heart, and his appearance was scarcely repulsive to her. Indeed, she once said that he had a *belle tête de mort*. She chose the least rickety of the two wretched chairs the kitchen contained, opened her porte-monnaie, took out the slip of gray paper, unfolded it, and displayed the cheque bearing the signature of Filoe and Co. to the eyes of the Rasper.

He received it very philosophically, seeming neither pleased nor displeased, but carefully scanning the signature and the private mark, and mumbling to himself meanwhile.

"It's righteous, mum," he said, "it's righteous. A many and a many of Filoe's cheques I've seen. Deara, deara me, the little tricks he used to be up to. It was his custom, mum, always to stop the payment of the cheques he drew. You went to the bank and couldn't get 'em cashed, or paid 'em in and they was refused. Then you went back to him in a rage, and he said he was very sorry, and gave you another cheque, which was to be as right as ninepence,—he'd made a little error in his balance, he said then; and deara, deara me, you used to get the money, and Filoe and Co. used to get sometimes twenty-four hours', and sometimes forty-eight hours' more interest on their little balances. Ah! but he wouldn't serve poor old Ephy such a trick."

Mrs. Armytage listened with amused composure to this anecdote of Messrs. Filoe's ingenuity.

"You wouldn't take my cheque," she remarked, "although you seem glad enough to accept one from a person who, it appears, was in the habit of cheating those with whom he dealt. You are a strange old man. Will you be good enough to give me back that—that paper, now you have the money?"

"In a moment, in a moment, mum," answered the Rasper. "It's upstairs—I'll fetch it directly; but I'm very lame to-day, and very short of breath. Won't you have a glass of sherry wine and a sweet cake now you are here, mum?"

Once, in the earlier days of her acquaintance with the Rasper, and feeling exceedingly faint, Mrs. Armytage had been tempted to accept

such an invitation. Preserving, however, a lively remembrance of the dreadful dregs, and of the apparently calcareous fragments powdered with grit, of which she had partaken on that occasion, she declined the hospitable offer with an outward smile and an inward shudder.

"And how did you get along with my little boy?" the Rasper asked, tottering backwards and forwards, either in quest of something or being anxious to obtain delay. "How did young Reuben behave, mum?"

"Ugh!" exclaimed the little woman, with profound disgust; "the wretch!"

"I know he isn't popular," his papa, with a leer, went on. "Reuben's eccentric—he's peculiar. He's a character, mum."

"So it seems," remarked Mrs. Armytage drily.

"I grant he's a fool at his book learning," resumed the fond parent. "I never could get him to be articed, nor nothing of that sort; but he's as sharp, mum—he's as sharp as a *ne exeat*. He's made his little pickings, too, poor fellow, out of his pocket-money, and what he's got from the gentlefolks as he's followed."

"He won't get any pickings out of *me*," was the mental resolve of Mrs. Armytage.

"You'd scarcely believe it, mum," the Rasper went on, dilating with the congenial theme, "that my boy, young as he is, has got houses—houses of his own, mum—in the thickest part of the Old Kent Road."

"Woe betide his tenants," was the observation of the little lady.

"Ah, woe betide 'em, indeed, if they don't pay. Sharp's the word with my Reuben; and Monday's his selling-up day regular. That boy will put the brokers in to the most obstroperous tenant as clean as a whistle, as quick as lightning, and as welcome as the flowers in May."

Mrs. Armytage bowed her head in mute acknowledgment of the talents of the younger Rasper, and the force and justice of his father's similes.

"The way he took an Arabian bedstead worth at least two-ten, and with a real feather-bed, from under a case of Fever, and had it smoked in the back yard with sulphur and mahogany-shavings, that it might go quite sound and healthy to the sheriff's sale, was grand—grand and noble, mum. Think of the courage of the thing. It reminded a friend of mine of the conduct of Boneyparty at the bridge of Waterloo."

The bridge of Arcola or Lodi might possibly have been mentioned by the Rasper's friend in connection with the career of the late Emperor of the French, but it did not matter:—decidedly not to Mrs. Armytage, who, yawning and drumming her pretty little fingers on the table, again requested Mr. Tigg to let her have what she wanted, and allow her to depart.

"Directly, directly," he answered. "Bless us, what a hurry we're in! Sometimes we can stop by the hour together with old Ephy. You won't have no sherry wine; you won't have no cake? Don't you want a

little accommodation; a tiny little bit of something at three months at, oh! so moderate a price. I'll renew, mum, I'll always renew for you. Don't you want some pretty article of jewellery to set off that charming little figure with? Say the word. Old Ephy's always ready to do business with you, and bears no malice for any mistakes made."

She laughed scornfully,—was it at the compliment or at the offer?—but she bit her lips and turned her head away. She had just then plenty of money at the banker's.

"Not to-day," she said; "don't tempt me, you wicked old man. Go and fetch me the paper, and let me go."

"A little bracelet now, just a fifty-pun'-note to buy sweet scents with," the Rasper persuasively continued, and leering at her like a worn-out satyr in whom avarice had extinguished desire. "Say the word, pretty Mrs. Armytage. Say the word. Look here, and here, mum."

He had been pottering about since the conversation commenced, and, piece by piece, had brought out from his iron safe a quantity of flat, oval morocco cases. He opened them with seeming carelessness, keeping her in conversation meanwhile. She cast her eyes—she could not help it—on the glittering gems as they lay in their nests of white satin. There were massive bracelets and tiny trinkets of gold filagree; there were big drop ear-rings of pearl; there were necklaces of emerald and sapphire; there were *rivières* of diamonds, serpents of diamonds, lockets studded with diamonds, Lilliputian watches bristling with brilliants; there were pencil-cases with amethyst tops, and even snuff-boxes and *bombonnières* of gold and mosaic and enamel; there were brooches, and chatelaines of dull, heavy-looking, red gold, all chased and bossed and graven; and there were legions of rings of every shape, of every size, that gleamed and glistened with a fascinating shimmer from among the dingy old papers on the kitchen-table, like the eyes of so many wild-beasts crouching in their lair and waiting for their prey.

"Look at them," cried Ephraim Tigg, his own old eyes sparkling as he greedily contemplated all this treasure; "look at the pooty things! Ain't they better than all the meat and drink and fine clothes in the world? *They* don't wear out, bless them. Think of the pretty things they'll purchase. These real pearls will buy coronets with sham ones round them. These diamonds will bring the brightest eyes in England down to the poor old beggarman's kitchen. They'll buy houses and lands, and honours and friends. When I die," quoth Ephraim Tigg, "I should like to be buried in di'monds."

Mrs. Armytage gazed but for a minute or so. She resolutely closed her eyes and clenched her hands, and once more entreated Mr. Tigg to do her bidding. With many leers and whinings, and much expatiating on the beauty and costliness of his wares—in truth, they were superb—the Rasper at length consented to totter out of the room. With her eyes still closed, the woman heard him clumping up-stairs with his

crutch-sticks; then, a lambent flame in her face, and presaging evil, she started up.

She, and the jewels, and her Impulse were together. She hung over the table; she touched and fondled the gems; she tried now one bracelet and now another on her arm. Her fingers fluttered among the rings, and had a pretty palsy. She cursed because there was no looking-glass. She clutched at necklaces. She wounded her hands with the pins of brooches. Oh, but to have one of them! "Take one," said Impulse. "Take one, Mrs. Armytage," cried twenty thousand little fiends nestling in her golden curls. She felt sick and dizzy. Her breath came short and hot. Her heart leapt up to the bars of its cage, and her busy fingers still went wandering, and wandering, and wandering among the perilous stuff.

"What can a poor little woman do with a parasol?" she muttered bitterly. "I can't strangle him with a cambric pocket-handkerchief. Upon my word, if I were a man, I'd brain him with one of his own crutches, and force my way out of the house with all these things."

Just at this moment her Impulse whispered, "Look there—look at that book, Mrs. Armytage; that's safe enough." In her agitation, rearranging a necklace in its case, she had disturbed and well-nigh thrown to the ground a portly folio volume. She knew it well. It was Ephraim Tigg's cheque-book. How many times had she seen and gloated over it! No longitudinal pamphlet of single cheques sufficed for the extended banking transactions of the Rasper. There were at least twenty on each page of the folio volume. Mrs. Armytage looked upon them, and, in her mind's eye, filled up the blanks between the graven forms with sums and with signatures. But the writing she pictured to herself all seemed to be in red ink. Some two or three cheques had already been cut from the page that lay open before her. The cheques were on white paper; the cuttings on the page looked by no means conspicuous. Would the abstraction of one, one little cheque only, be missed? No longer twenty thousand minor fiends among her curls, but the very Devil himself cried, "Take it, woman! be bold, and take it!"

A sharp penknife lay invitingly near, when just the tiniest creak in the world of the kitchen-door alarmed her. It had been left half open. She looked up, and saw Ephraim Tigg of Stockwell, the Rasper, through the aperture, leaning on his two crutch-sticks and watching her.

She caught his eye at once, and he hobbled in. "Aha!" he said cunningly, "we have been travelling on Tom Tiddler's ground I see. Pretty travelling, pretty travelling, isn't it?"

She was confused, and dropped her veil, and yet in her inmost heart was as thankful as one so fallen as she was could be, that for once she had not obeyed the promptings of that Impulse of hers. Ephraim Tigg swept in a moment the table with his hungry eye. He saw that nothing was missing:—nor gem nor cheque.

There was one loose draft, however, and that he had brought with

him. It was similar in form to those in his book. It was much crumpled, as though it had passed through many hands. Was there not a big black word branded or stamped across its face—a word that began with F? The draft was for four hundred pounds, and bore in the usual place of signature his own name, Ephraim Tigg, with his own name, or something very like it, appended thereto. With never a word he handed it to Mrs. Armytage, who, in equal silence, tore the document into minute fragments, and thrust them into her porte-monnaie. She made the usurer a low curtsy, laughed her little silver laugh, and was her own old charming self again.

"Quitte pour cette fois," she murmured between her shining teeth; "but it has cost me a hundred pounds."

The Rasper let her go, and when her skirts had ceased to rustle in his hearing, sat down, and nursed one of his bandaged legs.

"Not this time, but the next," he said, with a cunning smile. "Not this time, but the next she surely will. The bird must be caught; the pretty little song-bird must be caged and fed on Old Bailey grunsel."

Mrs. Armytage was unusually grave and meditative until the brougham had brought her to the Middlesex side of Westminster Bridge. She leant her cheek on her hand, and through her clustering curls looked wistfully at the passing crowds who sped about their several concerns, pure and honest ones mainly, it is to be hoped, not errands of sin and death. She passed a girls' charity-school, and wondered to see how white the children's caps and pinnars and sleeves were; how smooth and rosy their faces. "I could do without diamonds if I were a charity-girl," she thought. At the corner of the New Cut there was, as usual, the great flaunting ragged crowd reeking of fried fish and vitriol. "Is there any one among those wretches wickedder or more miserable than I am?" Mrs. Armytage asked herself. It was late in the bright May afternoon, the sun danced on the river, which the cloudless sky made blue against its will, hiding all the mud and the corruption beneath. She saw the myriad panes in the Parliament House all twinkling in golden sparkles; the sharp crocketed pinnacles piercing the clear azure; the long purple shadow that the great tower cast upon the flood. She brightened up herself now, perhaps in compliment to the Houses of Lords and Commons, and by the time her brougham had entered Birdcage Walk was quite radiant, and had bowed, smiled, shaken her ringlets, and waved her finger-tips to at least a score of fashionable acquaintances.

She was still a bird of passage, and had no house in London; but for the present was staying, not in an hotel, but in grand furnished lodgings close to Albert Gate, Knightsbridge. She dismissed the brougham at the door, and bade the driver go to the stables and tell them to send round the horses. In a quarter of an hour or so came a mounted groom, with a cockade in his hat,—had not her late husband

military rank?—leading her own saddle-horse, an exquisitely formed and satin-skinned chesnut. And forth came Mrs. Armytage, in the most graceful of riding-habits and the tightest-fitting of riding-trousers, and a little Spanish hat with a white feather swaling in it. The Spanish hat was a novelty in 1851. The great Sombrero and pork-pie revolution had not yet taken place. Reine, her faithful chambermaid, had dressed her. “She is perfect,” Reine exclaimed, as she stood at the door, and in unfeigned admiration saw her mistress assisted into her saddle:—she scarcely seemed to touch the outstretched palm of the groom—and giving her horse a light touch of the whip on the flank, caused him to curvet and paw his way up the street.

“Yes,” soliloquised Mademoiselle Reine, “she is perfect. She can do the *haute école* to a marvel. She would be a treasure at Franconi’s. *Elle y ira un jour, peut-être*. She is not a bad mistress, and never looks to see what there is between the pear and the cheese. *Mais, quelle drôlesse!*” And Mademoiselle Reine, shrugging her shoulders, shut the door.

Mrs. Armytage passed some hundreds of acquaintances in the park. Amazons and cavaliers in the ride; guardsmen and dandies lounging at the rails. She patronised them all. She puzzled the men; she was the *femme libre*, but allowed no liberties. No one could say any thing against her, and yet every body had an innate conviction that she did not belong to the category of the immaculate. The Southbank, who was in great force in the Park that afternoon, hated Mrs. Armytage even worse than she did Miss Salusbury. “She’s neither flesh nor fowl, nor good red-herring,” was the disparaging remark of the plain-spoken Southbank. The more cynical among the dandies said, that when she had a fixed residence in town, her house was one where you played at being well-behaved, and made believe to be proper. But every body liked Mrs. Armytage’s little dinners and card-parties, her dry Sillery, her sparkling Burgundy, and her conversation.

As she cantered homewards, she caught sight of Captain William Goldthorpe, leaning over the rails. He was as splendid as the sartor, sutor, shirt-maker, and jeweller’s art could make him; but his moustache hung down, his eyelids drooped, and he looked on the whole a very dejected dragoon indeed. She reined in her horse, and looked at him long and earnestly.

“Poor Willy Goldthorpe,” she said, “to be so young and good-looking, and to have so rich a papa, and yet to be in such dreadful difficulties.”

The dragoon recognised her, and raised his hat.

“Just like his own fair curls,” thought the widow; “yes, Willy is very like Hugh. Poor Hugh!”

And so she rode through Albert Gate.

CHAPTER XV.

QUIS CUSTODIET IPSOS CUSTODES ?

THEY had brought him away from Hoogendracht, and made a *garde-chiourme*—a keeper of gaol-birds—of him. He was not master of his own actions. He was in the hands of Fate; and Fate, through the intermediary of the Maritime Prefect of the department of the Bouches-du-Scampre, had brought him to Belleriport-upon-the-Sea, and made a gaoler of him.

The place was not one that was much coveted, although it entailed the wearing of a military uniform, even by people ordinarily so hungry for office, and so fond of wearing uniform, as are the French. An old soldier is glad enough to get a place as a gamekeeper or a *garde-champêtre*, or to slumber and snarl in the porter's lodge in some public establishment. He will not object to a place in the custom-house, or at the Octroi barriers in Paris. He will accept even at a pinch the appointment of *porte clefs* or guardian in a Parisian prison, or in a *maison centrale*. But he shuns the *chiourme*. An ineffaceable infamy attaches to all that is connected with the galleys. The *gardes-chiourme* are looked upon as cousins-german to the hangman. Although the convicts have been transferred to dry land, and (ten years since) were lodged in the Belleriport barracks, instead of being chained to the oar in monstrous bi-remes and tri-remes; the duties of their task-masters were still analogous to those which they fulfilled in the days when the galley-master walked backwards and forwards, from stem to stern, along the plank between the lines of rowers, and, with threats and execrations, let fall his lash on the shoulders of the slaves who faltered at the oar.

The gendarmes are accustomed to handle malefactors; but they shrink from the *chiourme*. They conduct the convicts to its gates, and give them over to their keepers, but there their office ends. Were they to accept the detestable functions attached to the place itself, their yellow belts would be tarnished, their moustaches would wax limp, and their jack-boots dull; and the glory of their cocked-hats would be diminished. For there is no greater error than to suppose that a gendarme occupies a humiliatingly inferior position in the military hierarchy of France. The gendarmerie is a *service d'élite*. No rude boys dare deride him as they do the humble "Bobby" in England. They fear and respect him, nay, even admire his imposing dress and resplendent accoutrements. He is favoured by the municipal authorities, and frequently deferred to,—not ordered hither and thither like a dog or an English policeman. I have heard a private in this force called "Monsieur le gendarme" by a shopkeeper.

So he had been brought from the peaceful Flemish convent,—from innocent labours, from the calm abode where, if the evil passions of men

were not absolutely extinguished, they were latent and subdued—to this *Aceldama* of Southern France, and put in authority over thieves and murderers. Out of a gang of twenty toiling at their slavish drudgery, the comrade who was to initiate him into his duty could point out fourteen who had taken the life of a man.

His duties were not many, and not difficult to learn. He was to be a common *garde-chiourme*. The commissary of the *Bagne*—the governor of this *Inferno*—read the minister's *placet*, and a sealed letter of recommendation from the office of the Maritime Prefect. He asked him nothing about his antecedents. Any stick is considered good enough to beat a dog with, and at Belleriport any man whose hand was strong enough to hold the stick was looked upon as qualified to hold it. The commissary asked him if he could read and write. He answered, Yes, and by command read a passage or two from the framed rules and regulations of the place hanging on the wall. He wrote, from dictation, an extract from the penal code of the *Bagne*, inflicting ten years' imprisonment with hard labour on any *garde-chiourme* convicted of having favoured the escape of a convict. The commissary glanced at his handwriting, and remarked to a subordinate, "He can spell." His name, François Vireloque,—it was so on his passport, and was as good as any other for such a nameless wretch as he,—his age, his height, were entered in a huge book. He was told to sign a certain declaration, promising obedience and fidelity, and he did so.

"There is nothing else that I can do for you," said the commissary, closing the great book. "We ask questions neither from our sheep nor our shepherds. All those we want to know are answered in writing. You will be given over to a *planton*, who will show you your duty, and I should counsel you to attend to it. After four days' looking about you, it will be time enough to go to work. *Allez, mon garçon*. You look strong and muscular enough to make a charming *garde-chiourme*, although I suppose you were pretty well tired of the world before you entered into this dog's life."

The commissary threw himself back into his leathern arm-chair, and blew his nose in a depreciatory manner. Even he despised his subordinates. He forgot to despise himself; for, you see, that is a lack of memory not very uncommon; and besides, there is something in possessing power, well-nigh as absolute as that of an Oriental pasha, over two thousand five hundred men, even though they happen to be the greatest rascals in creation. The Maritime Prefect was ostensibly the commissary's superior; but he had a perfect horror of the *Bagne*, seldom ventured within its precincts, and was very loth to interfere by word or deed with the scoundrelism it contained. "There is pitch enough in my ships," observed the prefect, "without my soiling my hands with those miscreants." So he kept grand state at the Hotel of the Prefecture, and approved all the reports and memoranda of the commissary. This func-

tionary was himself a very good-natured person, with a profound disgust for the place and the people among whom he was doomed to pass his life. He had once been a commissary of police in Paris,—in the brilliant Quartier de l'Opéra, in fact,—but breaking down in not discovering one of the innumerable conspiracies of Louis Philippe's reign, had been very nearly losing his situation, when a friend, who was *chef de bureau* in the department of marine, recommended him for the vacant post of commissary of the Bagne at Belleriport. "Tis an easy place, my friend, he said. 'Tis as easy as being a schoolmaster. Now there are schoolmasters and schoolmasters. If one has to teach intelligent children whose parents expect them to make progress, the calling has its difficulties and its responsibilities; but if one has only to teach incorrigible blockheads, whom no one expects to learn any thing, the life becomes easy. You have nothing to do but punish. *Voyez-vous.*" The commissary in difficulties accepted the situation, and held it satisfactorily. He was now in his tenth year of service. When the pious ecclesiastic who was almoner of the Bagne talked to him of reclaiming any of the outcasts under his charge, he made answer, "There is nothing about reclaiming prisoners in the government instructions; but there is a great deal touching upon double irons, the 'grandefatigue,' and the bastinado. Reclaim your penitents as much as ever you like, my dear abbé, only let them not shirk their work. It is with me they will have to deal if they do." The commissary had a pretty faded little wife, who had been an actress at the Opéra Comique. When she was in a good temper, she made him nice dishes, and they talked of the dear old days of masked balls, and dinners at the Café Anglais, and when on the morrow of the carnival disorderly *débardeurs* and *titis* used to be brought before him in their masquerade costume. When she was cross and had the *migraine*, he would come down into the Bagne and lead the convicts a terrible life. His lady called the two thousand five hundred prisoners "*ces gueux.*" The commissary allowed himself two hours' absence every evening, which he spent at the principal café in the town of Belleriport. The town commissary, the brigadier of gendarmerie, and some of the inferior *employés* of the prefecture would smoke, and take their *demi-tasse*, and play draughts with him; but the general public avoided the terrible commissary of the Bagne. *Il sentait la chiourme*—"he smelt of the hulks" they said. At home, in addition to the conversation of Madame, he cultivated jonquils, and played dismal overtures on the violoncello. A weary life this, but the commissary bore it, for his pay was four times larger than he would have received in an ordinary capacity elsewhere. He had his tenderness, his weak point, this stern commissaire. He had a pretty little daughter, Amanda, fourteen years of age, at school, in the convent of the Sacred Heart in Paris; and every franc of his savings helped to swell the fund which was one day to culminate in Amanda's wedding portion. *Elle sera dotée par le Bagne*—"the hulks shall give her a dowry," the commissary was wont gleefully to

exclaim. But little Amanda had never been within fifty leagues of that abhorred Belleriport.

François Vireloque, the newly-appointed gaol-guard, was duly handed over to the *planton* or guide. This man's name was a mystery. The commissary knew it of course; but he never mentioned it himself, and seemed profoundly indifferent about having a name at all. His comrades called him "Le Camus," the "snub," from the conformation of his nose. Even the commissary became accustomed to address him by this not very complimentary epithet. Le Camus seemed to care nothing about his nose, and went about his business tranquilly. He was an old hand at convict keeping, and had been at Belleriport twenty years. Previously, he admitted to have been a *garde* at Toulon, at Rochfort, and at Brest. "I like it," said Le Camus. "I am a philosopher, and there is quite enough to make me contented with my lot in the fact that I have to drive convicts about, instead of being one myself." He was a man of ancient and venerable appearance, with snowy hair, a rosy cheek, and a mild blue eye. These gifts of nature did not, however, prevent the Sieur le Camus from being an unconscionable old villain, with a hard heart and a cruel hand, and with an insatiable penchant for anisette.

"You are welcome, my friend, to Belleriport," he chuckled, as he led the new-comer to the storehouse, where he was to be supplied with his uniform. "We want new blood down here terribly. The commissary is a mere jackass, and the majority of our comrades have their brains in the soles of their boots. You will not enjoy much of the esteem of society at large,"—Le Camus habitually spoke in the inflated style common to the half-educated Frenchman;—"there is a prejudice, a most unjust prejudice, against the profession of *garde-chiourme*; but you will know how to make yourself respected among these gentlemen. There is one of them. You will make him respect you. Tchaoup!" And, with this curious interjection, he raised the thin cane or *badine*, which with the rest of his fellows he bore as a symbol of authority, and brought it down with all his strength—which, his age notwithstanding, was by no means contemptible—across the shoulders of a wretched creature in coarse drab vestments, and with a red woollen nightcap on his shaven head, who had been gaping and staring at the stranger; while his companion, another forlorn specimen of humanity, in similar attire, and to whom he was attached by strong leg-shackles, was busily polishing a cannon-ball with sand. He sat to this work, like a stone-breaker, with his legs wide apart, and his work-mate had to stoop a little. There was a pile of balls on either side of him, one rusty and the other polished.

It did not appear that the convict standing up had been guilty of any offence beyond gaping and staring. Le Camus merely struck him with his cane because he was fond of hitting people who dared not hit him again. The poor creature took his stripe as a matter of course, uttering a short, sharp yell, writhing his shoulders, and looking a curse at his tor-

mentor. The polisher of cannon-balls looked up with a grin, as though he thought it an exceedingly lucky thing to have escaped this stroke of practical humour on the part of the *garde-chiourme*; and a sailor-marine standing sentry—not over the convicts, but over the government store-house—close by remarked in gruff approval, “*Il l’a attrapé: c’est très-bien.*”

“The only way to get on with these brute beasts, comrade,” the Sieur le Camus said, by way of explanation, as they entered the store-house.

François Vireloque was speedily provided with his uniform, and with the kit and accoutrements allotted to a *garde-chiourme*. The dress was exceedingly hideous, and the convict element struggled with the military for predominance in it. A coarse greatcoat of blue drab, with red cuffs, collars, and epaulettes, gray trousers with a red stripe, thick boots, over which came clumsy white gaiters, a *bonnet de police*, with a red worsted tassel, and a pipe-clayed sword-belt, from which hung a short heavy sabre, and his equipment was complete. Then they gave him a dark-lantern, a pair of pocket-pistols, a pair of handcuffs, an iron *baïllon* or gag, and a *livret* or pamphlet containing the rules and regulations for the life of a *garde-chiourme*.

He reported himself before the commissary, was inspected, approved, and dismissed. The *planton* took him in hand again, and the remainder of that day, with the whole of the next, were devoted to exploring every nook and cranny of the great Bagne of Belleriport. He saw the convicts’ dormitories, their solitary cells, their work-rooms for wet weather, their hospital, and their graveyard. As the *garde-chiourme* was destined to remain long enough in Belleriport to become acquainted with all the features and peculiarities of his abode, it is not expedient at present to anticipate matters by describing any of these apartments in detail. By and by, you may know all about them, and why the *garde-chiourme* was sent thither, and why he had ceased to be a Lay Brother, and who and what he was, and whether he had ever worn the cassock of a clergyman, or the scarlet and gold-lace of a soldier, instead of the friar’s duffel-frock, or the convict keeper’s belt and *bonnet de police*.

When every part of the barrack had been visited, they entered a boat, manned by convicts, with a *garde-chiourme* as coxswain, who moved the tiller with one hand and plied his cane with the other, and crossed a sheet of water to the immense dockyard and arsenal of Belleriport. There the Lay Brother saw the convicts at work in gangs of hundreds together, always linked two and two. They were sawing blocks of stone, piling timber, dragging huge tumbrils full of stone and gravel, hauling weights up, and otherwise performing the duties of beasts of burden. And among them continually circulated the *gardes-chiourme*, calling them abusive names, and bringing down their lithe canes on their backs.

“At Brest,” observed Le Camus, “we are not permitted to use our

badines. At Belleriport a system more sage prevails. Tchaoup!" he cried again, flicking but not absolutely striking with his cane a tall and athletic convict, who with his mate was trundling a wheelbarrow full of sand up a plank, somewhat too lazily as the officer thought.

"Hands off!" cried the convict fiercely, and in the English tongue; but he took care not to return the insult, and kept a firm grip upon the wheelbarrow, as if fearful of giving liberty to his hands.

"It is well," sneered Le Camus, "it is well, Mr. John Bull. I dare say your words were mutinous enough, but you are too artful to get yourself into trouble. After all," he whispered to François Vireloque, "I was not quite *en règle* in touching him; the fellow was doing nothing that immediately called for punishment, and might have reported me to the sergeant, and so on to the commissary, for cruelty. To be sure, I might have said that he was skulking; and a *garde-chiourme's* word is always taken before a convict's. Look at the fellow. What a robust scoundrel he is. Are they all like him, I wonder, those Englishmen? When he came here first he had magnificent auburn hair, moustache, and beard. He is just your build—not to offend you by the comparison; and, upon my word, compère Vireloque, you have somewhat of an English look."

"I have been in England," answered the *garde-chiourme* slowly, "many, many years ago. I have seen many Englishmen like him yonder with the wheelbarrow. How sunburnt he is!"

"Yes, one might imagine that he had passed half his life in the Indies. But it is nothing, after all, but our southern sun. It soon tans the fairest convict, and if that doesn't tan him, the bastinado will. Here he is coming down the plank."

The athletic Englishman, with his chain-fellow, came down with the empty wheelbarrow. The chain-fellow could not have been of much assistance to him in his work. He was a diminutive and almost deformed Negro—an old Negro, too, who had dreadful white eyebrows seaming his black face, and with his red woollen nightcap wanted only a tricoloured cockade to look like a monstrous caricature of Toussaint L'Ouverture. He also had grinned and shown his teeth when the *garde-chiourme* had wantonly insulted him who shared his misery. The convicts at Belleriport were strictly practical believers in the philosophy of La Rochefoucault, and always found something to rejoice over in the misfortunes of their best friends.

The Englishman gazed with some interest at the new *garde-chiourme*, muttered something to himself in English, and then something to his yoke-fellow in French. Anon he was called away to some fresh task.

"What is he here for?" asked François Vireloque.

"Do you mean the Negro?" returned Le Camus. "*Meurtre*. Killing a cattle-dealer of Poissy. He got off the major sentence for *assassinat*. He didn't shoot or stab his man with a knife, but bit his nose off, tore one of his eyes nearly from the socket, and then knelt upon and strangled him.

There being no lethal weapon used, the jury found him guilty with 'extenuating circumstances,' and he only had *travaux forcés à vie*. He is a lifer. Don't you see his double irons. If he misconducts himself, he has triple ones; and as he can't walk with them, is obliged to lie on the floor of a cell."

"I don't mean the Negro. I mean the other."

"Oh, the Englishman. He's a lifer too. Burglary and attempt to murder too; that's his little affair. It took hard swearing, though, to convict him. He very nearly proved an *alibi*. Was at a railway-station his counsel protested when he was said to have been at Chaillot. All the eloquence of M. le Procureur Impérial had to be employed to drum a persuasion of his guilt into the heads of the jury. They are so stupid, those juries."

"At Chaillot, did you say?"

"Yes, at Chaillot. It was necessary to prove that he had been at Chaillot; though of course M. le Procureur Impérial could have proved him to have been any where he pleased. A very clever man M. le Procureur Impérial."

"Is he quiet?"

"Yes; *il est assez bon diable*. He has not yet been punished, although he frequently suffers for the sins of his black friend; for when the negro has triple irons for three days or so, our Englishman has to sit or stand by his side; and when the blackamoor gets the bastinado, which is his pleasant fate about once a month, his comrade has to stand by and look on."

"Horrible!"

"Horrible! Ah, you are but young to the business. You'll soon get all that nonsense out of your head, after you've seen a few more horrible things."

"Is he always chained to that black demon?"

"Always! Death alone can unrevet his manacles. You see, our lambs are never uncoupled save when one dies, or is sentenced to death for killing his brother convict."

"They kill each other, then?"

"Occasionally. *C'est une petite distraction*; it relieves the monotony of their existence."

"Do they never kill their jailers?"

"Jailers! Oh, you mean us? Bah, it is not a pretty word, jailer! Well, sometimes they murder a *garde-chiourme* who is fool enough to be looking the wrong way, but that is his own fault. And now, my friend," Le Camus continued, "I think we have seen every thing that is to be seen in the dockyard and the Bagne to boot. Two of our little institutions you have not witnessed, the infliction of the bastinado and of the guillotine. But you will have time enough to assist at both those ceremonies. We don't trouble the *Exécuteur des hautes œuvres* of the department when

we have a capital case. *La chiourme* keeps a guillotine on its own premises."

They took boat again, and went back to the Bagne. That evening Le Camus was on leave, and he took François Vireloque to a wretched *cabaret* just outside the dockyard gates, and frequented exclusively by *gardes-chiourme*. Here Le Sieur le Camus submitted to be treated to several glasses of absinthe, and became convivially conversational.

"You had better enjoy yourself to-night," he said, "for to-morrow you will have to study your *livret* of duties, and will be examined upon them by M. le Commissaire. Burn M. le Commissaire! I hate him. Yes; I will have yet another pipe and another absinthe. You are a silent fellow, but you are generous. How like an Englishman you are!"

"I am an Alsatian. I come from Strasbourg," answered François Vireloque.

"Ah, that's half a German, and a German's half an Englishman. By the way, I forgot to tell you that our friend who is chained to the Negro always stoutly protests his innocence. M. le Commissaire even says that he has doubts about his case. I remember once when that wretched black was in trouble, and the Englishman had to keep him company in his cell, that it was my duty to take them their victuals. The Negro was sleeping in his triple irons, the lazy old rascal, and I had some talk with the Englishman. He is not generally very communicative, but that evening I got him to loosen his tongue. I remember well the finish of his conversation. '*Garde-chiourme*,' he said, almost solemnly, 'I am the victim of an infernal plot. I am here through the wickedness and the treachery of a she-demon with yellow ringlets, who has been my Evil Genius through life.' What on earth is the matter with you, Brother Vireloque?" he exclaimed, suddenly stopping in his discourse.

The Lay Brother, the *garde-chiourme*, had buried his face in his hand, and his head prone to the *cabaret*-table, was sobbing violently.

A Jovial Bishop.

DOCTRINA facit difficultatem. Polemics, *cæteris paribus*, when indulged in to too great an extent, are apt to sour one's temper, causing a sour poison of ill-nature to exude from honest and kindly human hearts; and for this, among other reasons, a genuine man of flesh and blood is least himself when wrangling over the musty membra of a mangled logic, and most himself when he sits down to dine his friends and chirrup over his cups,—be they filled with Burgundy or Bohea,—or when he muses in his sanctum sanctorum about the “stuff of which our life is made.” Yes; bare doctrine is, in more senses than one, the parent of difficulty; and it must dwindle down to insignificance when compared with those home-amenities which visit us in our easy-chairs, sending echoes to the seat where love is throned. The author writes his healthiest words when surrounded by the soft associations of the fireside; he makes his thoughts flow silkenly to the purring of the cat, and measures his syllables by the music of the hissing urn. It is here that the divine, above all men, changes his outward aspect, and sloughs the skin of the over-wise serpent for a comfortable dressing-gown. He is not seldom least skilful with those weapons which the old controversialists fought with so valiantly and bloodily, and which, it is erroneously believed and asserted by many, are his only legitimate weapons. He does much good unprofessionally—exchanging his hard steel stiletto for the liberal and generous gray goose-quill, while his fair lady is busy hard by with the tea-kettle and the toast-fork. In the arena of controversy he is expected to exert himself so valiantly that he is apt to lose courage, to stammer, to “spin the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.” He is so thoroughly Christian that he dislikes to quarrel; his social life is often less narrow than his stricter orthodoxy. So it very frequently happens that we find the best-natured clerical gentlemen transformed into furies by professional fisticuffs, narrowed down to the limits of the village-pump by parochial prejudices. But separate them from their polemics and their parishes, meet them in the fresh bracing air of general literature, and you will not recognise them as the same individuals. There is in unfettered authorship, as in the cosy domestic parlour and the social gathering, a certain talismanic freemasonry, which unbuttons the stiffest ecclesiastical cassock, and reveals to us the warm human heart throbbing underneath. The mystical sign of brotherhood once exchanged, sectarianism is banished, and each unites with his neighbour to make society the sweeter welcome. The hard blinding dust of life is transformed into grains of golden diction; Bigotry plays Niobe on the bosom of Benevolence; and Dogmatism, stooping down to sip of Aganippe, touches the warm blushing cheek of a Pantheistic Venus! Old enmities tumble voluntarily overboard, like

swine missed after a storm. Jealousy maunders afar, on the hunt for a bishopric. All are united under one heaven, sanctified in one blessed humanity; and there are smiles of love to "put all face-physic out of countenance." In this free spirit, clergymen of all denominations have united to do good work for literature.

"I beg to remind honourable members," quoth a protesting British senator, "that we all owe much to the Jews." I beg to remind the honourable public that we can never repay the debt we owe to those members of the literary clergy who have jotted down stray secular notes for general circulation, while moralising about humanity in their rural homes, and musing "like Tityrus and Melibœus under the broad beech-tree." They have given to our literature much of its *bonhomie*, its wholesome sentiment and muscular vigour; and they have at the same time made their secular pages the vehicle of thoughts holy and ultimately Christian. Quoth parson Herbert, one of their number, a wise man and a pious:

"A verse may catch a wandering soul that flies
 Profounder tracts, and, by a blest surprise,
 Convert delight into a sacrifice;"

and, for this reason, many of the clergy, when desirous of preaching God, have invited the congregation, not to a mausoleum or a church, but to the mid resting-place on an English Helicon. Thence they can sow honey-seed of doctrine in soil where the beautiful words of the pulpit would be neglected and spring to wormwood. At the same time, we must not undervalue the good done to nations by their tougher theology—a good which springs from polemics slowly but surely, like shaky old Æson renewed in the boiling-pot of Medea. But, to a very large body of the public, their Christianity appears most vividly when separated from controversy and parochialism. The insular spirit which characterises so many of them in England, and which is apt to render their professional duties exclusive and their pamphlets pugnacious, salts their books with an egotism, and spices them with a pungency, which are peculiarly wholesome; and their contributions to general literature are consequently unique and individual. Take the sing-song of Robert Herrick,—the parson of whom I discoursed to the readers of *Temple Bar* in January last. Take much-abused Swift, or much-misunderstood Sterne. I could continue this catalogue for pages, and rely for names solely on my desultory reading. But, to come nearer to our own time, take the Essays of A. K. H. B., who has lately published two volumes in many respects so admirable.

One of the most loveable divines I ever read of was Richard Corbet, who attacked Puritanism so good-humouredly, when men wore cropped polls, and who is entitled to much respect for his literary productions alone. How many of my fair and gentle readers have heard of this old prelate, and how many of them have read his books? Very few, I am sure, if any, even of those who haunt the reading-room of the British Museum; whence, and from other quarters, I have gathered notes for a

gossip about him and some of his companions. He is better company for a leisure hour than Mr. Tupper the Proverbial Philosopher, if he is worse company for a studious hour than Robert Browning, the kernel of whose dry diction you find so sweet and savoury after you have spent hours in getting at it. Corbet was very orthodox, very English, very humorous, and idiosyncratic; he wrote verses full of trenchant satire and homely vigour. He was no Blougram, though he possessed all Blougram's self-complacence and belief in the Mother Church; though, when men were cutting each other's throats for the good of England, Gigadibs and he often passed the bottle together.

I should bore you, fair and gentle reader, by entering into an elaborate narrative of the jovial poet's life. The biography of a divine prominently engaged in public events cannot well be condensed into a moderately short memoir; and for this, among other reasons, although I have at my elbow matter enough to fill a large portion of this Magazine, I will content myself with noting only the prominent and more succinct incidents. Corbet was born in 1582, at the little village of Ewell, in Surrey. His parents were homely quiet people, well-born, and well-to-do in the world. Readers of Ben Jonson's *Underwoods*—that "box where sweet compacted lie," that casket of fine thoughts and fancies which should be opened oftener—will remember a beautiful and touching epitaph on a certain Master Vincent Corbet, who is described, in more subdued and feeling tones than were wont to issue from the mouth of the burly laureate, as

"A life that knew nor care nor strife,
But was by sweet'ning so his will
All order and disposure still."

This good Vincent Corbet was the father of our bishop; and he appears, if tradition is to be credited, to have been on good terms with the jovial crew who had met at the "Mermaid," the "Devil," the "Three Tuns," and the "Apollo." By this time he had settled down quietly into a good-natured quiet gentleman, rich enough at his death to leave his son an inheritance of freehold lands and tenements, lying in St. Augustine's Parish, Watling Street, London, besides five hundred pounds in money (a good sum in those days), which was to be paid to the heir when he had attained his twenty-fifth year. In common with most of the middle-class children near enough to London to reap the advantage, young Richard received the rudiments of education at Westminster School. He was, in 1599, admitted as a student of Christ's Church College, Oxford. In 1605, six years after his matriculation, he received his degree of Master of Arts, and immediately afterwards became known as a wit who wrote excellent satirical verses.

An anecdote, related among other "Mery Passages and Jestes" which have been handed down to posterity in manuscript, relates to this period. "Ben Jonson was at a tavern, and in comes Bishop Corbet, but not so then, into the next room. Ben Jonson calls for a quart of *ram* wine,

and gives it to the tapster. 'Sirrah,' says he, 'carry this to the gentleman in the next chamber, and tell him I sacrifice my service to him.' The fellow did so, and in those terms. 'Friend,' says Bishop Corbet, 'I thank him for his love; but prithes tell him that sacrifices are always burnt.' " It is just possible that the reader, like myself, will fail to perceive much ingenuity in this joke; but in those days worse men than Corbet set up shop with very similar ware, and throve exceedingly. It is seldom the joke that sets the table in a roar so much as the joker. If you have ever been at a dinner-party, you will pardon me for retailing this ghastly anecdote; for you have learnt that the receipt for a good successful pun contains other ingredients besides language. When the heart is warmed up with merry company, good discourse, and a spice of what Dick Swiveller calls the "balmy," then is the time for Touchstone to step in with his cap and bells and "set the table a-jingling." I wonder whether the old laureate and the young master of arts fraternised on that occasion. I fear not; for the former was, in the sere and yellow leaf, still too proud to laugh at his own expense. He was shortly to find a tough, quarrelsome opponent in young George Wither, whom the burghers and pudding-wives were beginning to patronise. He still expected, now testily, that all and sundry should gape with admiration, when he donned his "coachman's coat" and waddled down to the taverns from his house in Aldersgate Street.

In 1605, Corbet was ordered to pronounce a funeral oration over the lamented Henry, Prince of Wales, and he appears to have acquitted himself excellently. "He speeched it," says honest Anthony Wood, "very oratorically, in St. Marie's Church, before a numerous auditory." Later in the same year, he performed a similar service over Thomas Bodley, the founder of the library which still bears his name,—the Bodleian. Soon after this he plunged into polemics, whither I shall not follow him. Enough to say that he curried favour with Laud, then rising into power, and exercised a considerable amount of salutary discipline on the heterodox. He became Dean of Christ Church, Vicar of Carrington, and "Prebendary of Bedminster Secunda in the Church of Sarum." Old Wood takes occasion to note that he was "a quaint preacher, and therefore much followed by ingenious men;" a fact which might readily be gathered from some of his extant orations. In 1618 he made a trip to France, whence he wrote "an epistle to Sir Thomas Aylesbury;" he was disappointed with the country, the king, the court, even with Paris the magnificent, and returned more good-humoured and English than ever. He describes his journey in a copy of verses, humorous, but of small poetical value. The death of Master Vincent, his father, which took place in 1619, filled him with much grief; and he mourned the bereavement in a peculiarly tender poem. Two years afterwards, he preached before King James, on the occasion of his Majesty's second visit to Oxford. It appears that, some time previously, the king had presented him with a ring, a mark of good favour and esteem; and this ring (if an anonymous

wag of the time speaks truly) was the consequence of much confusion and self-congratulation. Mr. Anonymous, describing the Dean's sermon, uses the following language :

"The reverent Dean,
With his band starched clean,
Did preach before the King;
A ring was his pride
To his bandstrings tied,—
Was not this a pretty thing?
The ring without doubt
Was the thing put him out,
And made him forget what was next;
For every one there
Will say, I dare swear,
He handled it more than the text!"

There were wild wags in Oxford in those days, as there are now; they pelted each other with quip, quiddity, satire, and badinage,—some of which took the form of bonbons, some the form of snow-balls with cruel stones in the core. There was both bad feeling and good feeling, but the latter predominated. The grave doctors and undergraduates tasted moderately of that "good liquor our forefathers did use to drink of, the drink which preserved their health and made them live so long, and do so many good deeds." They abused and complimented each other in song and epigram, Latin or English, blunt or euphuistic. Dainty passages of wit passed to and fro in the quadrangles; little animosities were vented in quaint copies of verses, that did no harm and relieved the author of a superfluity of bile. Corbet, in his frolicking days, headed the wild rovers, and led off many an intellectual revel; arguing in the college-hall, or plaguing the tutors, or tustling with the proctors. He entered into the sport with all his heart, incarnating its best drollery; his "delights did show most dolphin-like." On one occasion, after he was a Doctor of Divinity, he and some companions were sitting at a tavern near the Cross of Abingdon (which cross, says Aubrey, who tells the story, "was then the finest in England . . . 'twas admirable curious gothic architecture, and fine figures in the niches"), when a vendor of ballads, hoarse with bawling, accosted them, and "complained that he had no custom,—he could not put off his ballads." It was market-day, and there was a great crowd in the street. "The jolly Doctor puts off his gown and puts on the ballad-singer's leathern jacket, and, being a handsome man and a rare full voice, he presently vended a great many, and had a great audience." A strange prank, this, for a venerable D.D.; but let us not be too severe. Set down this ballad-singing to sympathy with the ill-luck of him in the leathern jacket. The Doctor found higher game on other occasions; for there was a war of words going on between Oxford and Cambridge. Cambridge was snubbing her poets, slighting the *belles lettres*, and putting on antiquated sable. She had paid small honour to the "mountain belly and the rocky face" of her great son, the Apollo of the "Mermaid" tavern,—so, at least, said the men of the sister

university. So the Oxford men determined to use Ben as a means of flagellating the Cambridge men. Corbet was one of those who invited Jonson to come over to Oxford, and I trust the burly Laureate and the jolly Doctor ate of a wine-sop together.

There are some individuals severe enough to censure angrily the pranks of our Bishop; but those who, like myself, can say with Boccaccio, that they "live in an honest way, and can tell that twelve pence make a shilling," will judge more leniently. I hope, good reader, that neither you nor I approve of sottishness and instability; yet we like to hear that abominable libel on the monks of old, and Still's glorious ale-song from "Gammer Gurton's Needle." The fact is, we know that there is a medium between stiff morality and loose habits; and we know also that our code of morals is not the same as that followed two hundred and fifty years ago. There is a wild gipsy element in our English blood which the counting-house can never eradicate. We admire merry living, practical joking, and thorough loving and hating; we like pluck, as we call it, in its erratic form. Shall I provoke the severe people still further by narrating another anecdote? Before I do so, I will refer them to my first paragraph, and hint that Corbet sought these freaks as a relief from bitter polemical animosities. He never disgraced the pulpit; he spake always well and wisely, and did much good; and one who knew him says that, when preaching, he showed a "most grave and reverend aspect." Now for the anecdote, which I shall tell in the words of Aubrey. "His (Corbet's) chaplain, Dr. Lushington, was a very learned and ingenious man, and they loved one another. The Bishop would sometimes take the key of the wine-cellar, and he and his chaplain would go and lock themselves in, and be merry; then first he layes down his episcopal hood, 'There layes the Doctor;' then he putts off his gown, 'There layes the Bishop;' then 'twas, 'Here's to thee, Corbet,' and 'Here's to thee, Lushington.'" We must hope that these visits to the wine-cellar were exceptional; and we must at all events remember that men, both lay and clerical, drank larger quantities of sack in those days than it is respectable for any modern Falstaff to carry. The Doctor may have drunk neither deep nor often; and his deeper nature was all the clearer for the eccentricity wantoning from it, to comfort the eyes of cheerful friends.

"The open merry man
Moves like a sprightly river, and yet can
Keep secret in his channels what he breeds
'Bove all your standing waters, choked with weeds."

So says Ben, who knew thoroughly what he was talking about, when he drew on his own experience of the jovial days he had spent with Queen Bess's wits, and wished to prove that his merry hours among them were not all pinchbeck and tinsel.

Corbet wantoned with the wild fellows of Oxford, before and after he had fallen in love with Mistress Alice, daughter of his fellow-collegian, Dr. Leonard Hutton. He married this young lady in 1625, and by her

had two children, a son and a daughter, the first of whom died at a very early age. Favoured by Laud and abused by the heterodox, he continued his jests and merry-makings; but he never lost the good opinion of worthy men, who united in speaking well of him. "One time as he was confirming, the country people pressing in to see the ceremonie, said he, 'Beare off there, or I'll confirme ye with my staffe!' Another time, being to lay his hand on the head of a man very bald, he turned to his chaplain, Dr. Lushington, and said, 'Some dust, Lushington,' to keep his hand from slipping. There was a man with a great venerable beard; said the Bishop, 'You behind the bearde.' " He was elected Bishop of Oxford on the 30th July 1629, and was consecrated at Lambeth in the November following. In 1632, however, he was removed to the busier see of Norwich, where he was engaged for some time in settling religious disputes.

He was interested about this time in a movement which is historical; and a brief allusion to his connection with it will interest every Londoner who has walked up Ludgate Hill to hear the ritual of a Sunday. Special subscription was opened up by the clergy for the purpose of rebuilding St. Paul's Cathedral, which had remained in ruins since its second destruction by fire, early in the reign of Elizabeth. Laud subscribed one hundred pounds, to be renewed annually, and Corbet four hundred; and, headed by these well-known names, the subscription-list soon reached a very large total. Corbet preached a sermon on the subject, and took occasion to say many sly things to the congregation. This sermon, which is preserved, contains quaint sayings. For instance, alluding of course to the cathedral, the Bishop said: "St. Paul complains of stoning twice; his church of firing. Stoning she wants indeed, and a good stoning would repair her." There is another droll passage, which will serve as a thorn for the cushions of some church-goers. "I am verily persuaded, that were it not for the pulpit and the pews (I do not now mean the altar and the font for the two sacraments, but for the pulpit and the pews as you call them), many churches had been down that stand. Stately pews are now become tabernacles, with rings and curtains to them. There wants nothing but beds to hear the Word of God on; we have casement, locks, and keys, and cushions; I had almost said, bolsters and pillows; and for these we love the church. I will not guess what is done within them: who sits, stands, or lies asleep at prayers, communion, &c.; but this I dare say—they are either to hide some vice, or to proclaim one." This was pithy and witty enough to rebuke, without offending, the religious indolence of Dives; and it is a fair specimen of the sort of humour for which Corbet was famous as a preacher. Out of the pulpit he amused his friends by observations fully as mirth-provoking. He was extremely pleasant in conversation—an apt humorist. Aubrey tells a first-rate story, which furnishes some idea of his powers of "word-twisting" and repartee. "Dr. Stubbins was one of his cronies; he was a jolly fat doctor and a good housekeeper. As Dr. Corbet and he were riding in Hob-

lane in wet weather ('tis an extraordinary deepe dirty lane), the coach fell, and Corbet said, that Dr. S. was up to his elbows in mud, and that he was up to the elbows in Stubbins!" Poor Stubbins! he could not have felt particularly comfortable at that moment. For Corbet was a tall man, big of brawn and bone, and no light weight to fall soft as a feather. The good Bishop died on the 28th of July 1635. For some time previous to his decease he suffered from an internal disease, which caused him acute agony.

Fuller rightly expresses Corbet's disposition when he describes him as having been "of a courteous carriage, and no destructive nature to any who offended him, counting himself plentifully repaid with a jest upon him." He was such a happy, even-minded, and merry man, that even his opponents could not hate him as heartily as they wished to do. He was apt to give offence, for he could not for the life of him refrain from having his joke out; but his heart was honey, and there was no gall on his tongue. He delighted to attack Puritans and Puritanism; but he always attacked them good-naturedly, even in his "Distracted Puritane," where he makes one of the sect sing an odiously absurd ballad with the refrain:

"Boldly I preache, hate a cross, hate a surplice,
Mitres, copes, and rotchets,
Come, hear me pray, nine times a day,
And fill your heads with crotchets."

Care came seldom to him, for he gave her scurvy entertainment; he himself bade mourners eat and be of good cheer, because, he said, "no sorrow can descend so deep as meate." His was not the good humour of a simpleton,—he was a wise man of the world; his was a good humour derived from mother-wit and underpropt with reason. "Whatsoe'er he trode on was a rose." He was honoured most by those who knew him best. The orthodox bowed down in homage to him, and brought him honour, a good garment to put on fair deserts. He lived an honest life, and a useful, and wrote scarcely a line which, dying, he would wish to blot.

But none of his poems were published until after his death. He probably thought too little of his Muse, to bring her blushing before the English public; or, perhaps, he deemed it inconsistent with the dignity of a bishop, Richard Norwich, to become known to the vulgar mob as a writer of verses. Be that as it may, he made no grasp at the laurel. He has left little behind him; but what he has left possesses both the sweetness and the drollery of his character. His longest and most typical poem is his *Iter Boreale*, a description of a trip from Oxford to New-ark. "Three clerkes of Oxford—Doctors, too, and two that would be Doctors"—set out from their university, and after a variety of amusing adventures reach Leicester, where they are fleeced by mine host at the inn, as the author takes good care to tell us. At Leicester they visit the tombless grave of Wolsey, which arouses their indignation as churchmen,

and causes them to moralise as philosophers. The great cardinal might have had, says the speaker,

"A palace or a colledge, for his grave!
Yet here he lies interred, as if all
Of him to be remembered were his fall.
If thou art thus neglected, what shall we
Hope after death, who are but shreds of thee?"

At Nottingham, they cross the Trent, pray to St. Andrew as they ride into the town, and observe that the people, singularly enough, "dwell not in howses, but are earth't in holes." At Warwick, they encounter Sir Fulk Greville (not yet Lord Brooke) and the Rev. Samuel Burton, archdeacon of Chichester. And so onward, twisting and turning, to Newark, approached through pleasant green fields, where "nature was wanton." There are many humorous, and not a few really fine, passages in this poem. Corbet is severe on the innkeeping fraternity generally, but especially on the hostesses; an ugly hostess, he fancies, is bad enough; but a handsome one still worse, because she steals both your heart and your purse, and "every welcome from her adds an item." There is an interesting description of a visit to Bosworth Field,—interesting because, through it, we learn the name of the actor who originally played Richard III., and ascertain, almost beyond doubt, that this actor "starred" the character about the provinces. The traveller is describing mine host, a man "full of ale and history," who has jogged out to the battle-field with his guests :

"—He could tell
The inch where Richmond rose, where Richard fell,
Besides what of his knowledge he could say,
He had authentic notice from the play;
Which I might guess by 's mustering up the ghosts
And policies not incident to hosts;
But chiefly by that one perspicuous thing,
When he mistook a player for a king;
For when he would have saide, King Richard died,
And called, A horse! a horse!—he Burbage cried."

Burbage, it will be remembered, was a fellow-actor of Shakspeare. The *Iter Boreale* evinces some poetry and immense humour; it is, like the journey it describes, random, idle, and full of the pleasure of the moment. It is really pleasant to think of those four hard-worked Doctors, leaving the gray quadrangle, mirthfully trudging on foot along quiet country roads, accepting adventures as they turned up with a zest, and moralising on ground hallowed by the immortalising hands of Poetry and History, "accompanied," like Overbury's sweet *Milkmaid*, "with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones." At this rough season when I write, and when melancholy, born of rain or fog, settles in the spleen, it makes me long for the summer again; that you and I, gentle reader, may leave the city behind us, put into our pocket a copy of Thomson's *Seasons*, and wander as we list among green lanes, over stiles, up green hills, and into honest ale-houses. I do not mention the

Seasons unadvisedly ; and the reader who has not taken the trouble to see beauty in that book will thank me in due time, if he takes the hint and reads "Summer" with a real English summer-landscape before him. That is the only way to understand Thomson. Adopt my method : in any of the four seasons compare the printed description with the true picture, and you will go to the other extreme, and idolise. I shall not regret this digression, if it converts one lover of nature to the Thomsonian faith, of which I myself am an earnest disciple.

There is a great deal of good writing to be found among Corbet's miscellaneous poems. Perhaps the best is the "Proper New Ballad intituled the Faëryes Farewell," in which the departure of the good neighbours is bewailed in a fitting strain of poetry :

"Farewell rewards and Faeries,
 Good housewives now may say,
 For now foul sluts in dairies
 Do fare as well as they.

And though they sweep their hearths no less
 Than maides were wont to do,
 Yet who of late for cleanliness
 Found sixpence in her shoe ?

* * * * *

It was a just and christian deed
 To pinch such black and blue—
 Oh ! how the Commonwealth doth neede
 Such justices as you !"

Peace to thy *manes*, Corbet ; and may no worse man ever write Oxford or Norwich after his Christian name ! You had the true Christian heart, albeit you were no Mawworm ; and you wrote excellent verses. You tasted once or twice of the wine of our fathers, in that sly cellar of yours ; but I demand for you a more fitting epitaph than that you yourself wrote on John Dawson, Butler of Christ Church :

"A watery verse
 Will serve the turn to cast upon his hearse.
 If any cannot weepe among us heare,
 Take off a cup, and so squeeze out a tear—
 Weep, O ye BARRELS !"

R. W. B.

Broad awake.

DOCTORS and quacks of every age, from Paracelsus down to the most popular physicians of the present day; medical books of every kind, from terrifying Buchan down to the friendly and suggestive pamphlets in which "What to eat, drink, and avoid," is so kindly pointed out to us, concur in reprehending the custom of supper-eating, and advise us not to fill the stomach before retiring to rest. I do not think that, in the present day, this caution is much needed; the grand era of supper-eating is gone by; that glorious comfortable meal, over which Coleridge dogmatised, and Hazlitt criticised, and Lamb stuttered forth his crackling puns or half-childish, half-worldly, always benevolent, wisdom, is no longer tolerated; degenerating into a medical students' orgie, consequent upon a *vingt-un* party, and followed by hot potations, doleful sentimental melodies, and far more doleful comic songs, it has gradually evaporated; and if medical science were right in its denunciation, medical science can now plume itself in having lost one of its implacable foes.

In justice to this custom, now fallen into desuetude, I am bound to say that I do not think many of us suffered from its practice. The heavy stertorous sleep, the prolonged waking, accomplished with difficulty at an hour protracted far beyond the usual time, and distinguished by a peculiar sensation of the last baked potato in the throat, and a thoroughly connoisseur-like flavour of the whisky, were bad enough in their day; but they were nothing like so injurious in their tendency, so objectionable and so unconquerable as the hopeless wakefulness,—the broad, staring self-assertion, the bright unsoothable self-possession, which I have now learned to look upon as nightly visitants—now, in these later days, when I am fully conscious of the possession of a liver, and when nothing but the thinnest claret forms my sleeping draught.

At this dead season, which with me is about four in the morning, I wake up, to a certain degree refreshed and painfully lively; my body has been tolerably rested, while my mind seems ready to go through any amount of exertion. Turn the pillow, close the eyes, stretch out the limbs in a new position,—all in vain! my mind has been aroused, and is not going to let me off so easily; she now sees her way to a nice quiet communion with me, undisturbed by the thousand business worries which absorb me so completely in the day-time; and in order that there may be no chance of my attention wandering, she turns my thoughts into a comprehensive channel, and sets me pondering upon certain great hopes and fears connected with my past, my present, and my future life.

I begin with my present, and start with wondering whether I shall ever get that novel finished upon which I have been engaged any time during the last six years. For a man who lives, to a certain extent, by

his pen, and only has opportunities of plying that pen in the intervals of other business, the completion of a novel is a very difficult matter. While the grass grows, the steed starves; and while the poor author, tolerably fagged by his law, or his ledger, or his diplomacy, is weaving the intricate woof of his plot, or consuming weeks in the elaboration of his character-sketching, the children's shoes are wearing out, mamma's milliner's bill is coming in, and the entire household is eating away for dear life. The necessity for ready money leads to the production of work which does not take long to produce, and which is paid for on completion; and hence the ordinary working author devotes himself to the composition of "pot-boilers," as they are irreverently called, *i. e.* of those essays and tales which form the staple of our periodicals, and the long-projected and oft-thought-of novel is laid aside for brighter days. My novel, at least as much of him as is complete (I am making him piecemeal, as Frankenstein did *his* monster), lives between two sheets of cartridge-paper in the right-hand bottom drawer of my desk. He seldom sees daylight, save in the autumn, when I go away to the sea; and then I invariably take him with me, with the full determination of bringing him home completed. He has been to half the seabords of England, but his treatment is always the same: he lies unnoticed at the bottom of the portmanteau till the end of the first week, then he is brought out and laid on a table opposite the window; then I work at him desperately for an hour until, coming to a stand-still, I look up for inspiration, and then the sight of the sea and the sky and the sun goads me to fling up my pen and run out, and the novel is returned into the portmanteau and brought back to town.

Broad awake, I make several notable plans about this great work of fiction; determine to take him in hand at such and such a time, to devote certain hours on certain days to his whole use and benefit; and then I begin to think of him as achieved and published, and to wonder what kind of reception he will meet with, what the reviewers will say, and how many copies Mr. Mudie will take. And then I wonder how I began to write at all, and am astonished to recall how long I have been at it, and marvel whether it will last, and whether my poor fancy and descriptive powers—poor enough, Heaven knows, and in all sincerity little enough thought of by myself—will yet serve me in fighting the battle of life in the work-a-day world; or whether the reading public will soon tire of my style, or of me as an exponent of it, and finding some more promising aspirant to their favours, leave me and my essays unread and disregarded. *Ne sutor, &c.*; and every man working at literature will find plenty of matter for mental cud-chewing in thinking over his pursuance of his own profession. There can be but few of us without conscience-prickings for sins both of commission and omission,—how many hasty judgments recorded, how many criticisms slightly warped, and tinged (not designedly, certainly, but still tinged) with your personal like or dislike of the person under notice. It is easy enough to

repeat the parrot-cry, "This should not be!" Despite the constant attacks made upon them (always by members of their own body, mind), I firmly believe that the newspaper critics of the English press—whether literary, artistic, or dramatic—are no venal hirelings, but conscientious men, and, as the world goes, to the full as truth-telling as their compeers in any other walk of life. That it is impossible to be as open as they could wish, I allow; the very fabric and composition of society does not permit it. How can you, who are perfectly well known to be the literary reviewer for the *Daily Beacon*, print your opinion that Jones's new novel is dull and silly, when you daily brush shoulders with Jones at your club? or, how can you boldly assert that neither by education nor personal appearance is Roscius fitted for *Hamlet*, when you are certain to meet him next day at your mutual friend Mæcenas's table? What can you do? You hint that Jones's book might be more lively, and that Roscius's performance is not entirely satisfactory: and who does more? So long as writers, actors, and critics form links of the same social chain, you must not be surprised at each being as lenient as possible to his fellows.

Broader awake than ever (for I find this a very fertile theme for reflection, and go through several special instances which, as newspaper reports say, "possess no general interest"), I shoot off at a tangent, and my thoughts wander back to the first attempt ever made at composition, and it and all its belongings come vividly before me. It was a set of verses, begun, I am ashamed to say, while apparently listening to a very dull sermon, and finished with much bodily torture, involving the slapping of my forehead and the biting of my nails. When finished and written out in the boldest of hands, I sent it to the editor of a Magazine, then in existence, but long since defunct, who had formerly been acquainted with our family. At the end of a week I received an answer from him couched in highly complimentary terms, and enclosing a proof of my effusion. On the corner of the proof was pinned a small printed ticket requesting that it might be returned as soon as possible to the printer's. I determined that the injunction should be obeyed. I read the proof quickly, made an elaborate alteration in the position of a comma, and then, though the printing-office was less than half a mile distant, started off there at once in a cab. I gave the proof to the foreman with my own hands, and then retired, with a slight feeling that people would probably point me out to each other in the street. Then I began to hunt the newspapers for advertisements of the Magazine. Three months passed and my verses had not appeared. I wrote an humble but remonstrative letter to my friend the editor; he replied with a general reference to circumstances over which he had no control, but reiterated his promise of giving me a speedy appearance. Three more months elapsed, and I wrote again; the editor's reply was, I think, to the effect that he declined to be worried. Then six months passed; and by this time, having perpetrated more lucubrations, and found several issues for my muse, I wrote a very dignified epistle to the editor, and begged him to consider

our agreement (there never had been the smallest agreement between us!) at an end, and to give me liberty to publish my verses elsewhere. Of this letter he took no notice; and that winter I had the pleasure of seeing my poem published in an Annual, as letter-press to a steel engraving, with which it had not the slightest connection. *

Hopes and fears of past years crowd before us in this night season, and rapidly follow each other in apparently never-ending succession. My eye is caught by the flicker of the night-lamp reflected on a picture on the wall,—the picture of a tall boy, with curling brown hair, and a large lay-down collar, and my thoughts turn off at once to the period when that portrait of myself was taken.

Where did I live then, and who was I? If you know any thing of London, you will be familiar with that favourite resort of the play-going public the Cracksidium Theatre. Well! When I first knew the Cracksideum, five-and-twenty years ago, that splendid portico underneath which you are "set down," and that handsome saloon devoted to refreshment purposes, did not exist; a very comfortable family house occupied the space now filled by them,—a house devoted to the presiding genius of the theatre,—and in that house, I, a little child, was raised and brought up in the most consummate ignorance of the Cracksidium, the theatrical world, and every thing thereto pertaining. Not until I was ten years old did I enter the walls of a theatre: there were no morning performances in those days, and if there had been, I should not have been allowed to go to them. Every thing connected with the theatre was a tabooed subject in my presence, and it was only by keeping my ears exceedingly wide open to the conversation of the nurses and their friends, that I learned I was living so near to an enchanted spot. From the talk of these people I gleaned my first notions of theatrical life,—of beautiful people, who wore lovely dresses, and danced before others who sat in the "boxes" and "pit." These last terms puzzled me exceedingly; for, as we all of us in our brain form some confused idea of a place that we have heard of but not seen, I had pictured to myself a theatre, not, indeed, entirely from brain-work. At the bottom of a large flight of stairs, a small private door led from our house into the lobby of the theatre, the bare, broad lobby at the end of which were the pay-places. Into this lobby I had peeped when every body was occupied (which was constantly, Heaven knows, in that house!). I had stolen down the stairs, opened an inch or two of the door, and peeped through into the theatre; for such I imagined this lobby to be, having no idea of there being any thing beyond it. There was plenty of space, I thought, for the beautifully-dressed people to dance in the middle; the boxes (in my mind literally large open trunks) must be brought in at night before it began; but as for the pit, I never liked to think of that!—my reading at that time was entirely Scriptural, and my only notion of a pit was the place into which Joseph was thrown by his brethren: one could not imagine people taking their pleasure in that! Memories of after years connected with the Cracksidium, when I

had been initiated into the mysteries of the place, come crowding thick upon me: I remember going with my father through groves of scenery, and under arches of unused "flats" and "wings," to see the elephant, who, when she was not employed in lifting crowns off wrongful on to rightful heads, or in threatening villains with her trunk, lived in a railed-off space at the back of the stage. I remember Christmas dinner-parties, to which at dessert-time always came the head scene-painter, in a loose canvas suit splashed to the eyelids, to drink a few glasses of wine, and then return to his superintendence of the new pantomime scenery, which must be ready by the next night; and my earliest introduction to public life was, when seated in a box, I frightened the villain of the piece from his propriety by screaming out to him, then holding the heroine within his murderous grasp, "not to kill dear mamma." What further recollections of that time have I? Of being suddenly summoned to my father's managerial room, and, on entering, of finding, sitting squatted on the grand piano, a terrible being in the form of an ape, who gibbered at me frightfully, and who, on my bursting into tears of alarm, rushed over, doffed monkey-face and hirsute skin, and comforted me with kisses and French bonbons, being, in fact, no baboon, but the celebrated Herr Simioso Petito, the well-known man-monkey and gnome-fly, who was there for a rehearsal of his powers; of my introduction to the Belgian Giant, the tallest, stupidest, kindest-hearted, and most knock-kneed son of Anak, with a pretty little wife, and an utter incapacity to do any thing but be big; of a strange childish feeling, half-terror, half-love, of a property room, filled with gigantic grotesque masks, fairies' wands, gilded chairs, harlequins' bats, *papier-mâché* fruit, monarchs' crowns, short broadswords, long rapiers, suits of armour, pantomime tricks, and revolving stars; and of a deeply-planted and sedulously-watered hatred of theatricals, which, I am bound to say, never bore the smallest fruit.

It is an unromantic confession; but the not too savoury odours of gas and orange-peel, not distinct but mixed, a flavour which those who are not accustomed to the *penetralia* of a theatre cannot comprehend, always recall to me that happy time of youth. What extraordinary influence over the memory has that faculty of smell! It is twenty years ago that I, a lad, was staying with some friends in a suburb of Liverpool, where a Methodist chapel was being built, and to this day the smell of newly-carpenentered wood reproduces that chapel and its occupants at once and distinctly before my eyes. And there must be few of us but have had similar experiences with flower-scents and perfumes.

Even more influential in its power of recalling the time and the persons with which it was associated, is music. Even when she "dips her hollow shell in Thought's forlornest wells," as Owen Meredith so beautifully expresses it, how inexpressibly charming are the associations which music raises! Back come the loved ones from the spirit-land as the old tune steals forth upon the air, and each mellowed note brings to mind some

additional incident of the bygone time when it was last heard. The effect is generally melancholy, it must be confessed; but it is so soothing that we love to hear it, and sit listening, our eyes filled with tears. Was it not Haynes Bayley who said so sweetly—

“ Sing, then, oh, sing to me
That ancient melody
We heard in former years,
Forgotten long ago.

Ah, I remember well
Where first I heard that lay,
Down in a pleasant dell,
Just at the close of day.
Garland of roses made
A roof from bough to bough ;
Friends sat beneath their shade :
Alas, where are they now ?”

Only last night I was at a small social gathering, where we had had a little music ; and when I, like Oliver, “ asked for more,” the lady of the house sat down to the piano, and instead of continuing the selections from *Amber Witch* and *Robin Hood*, or variations from the simple *Tannhäuser*, she let her fingers wander over the keys for a moment, and then started off into the brilliant dance-music of ten years since. Out they rung, one after the other, the *Elfin*, the *Wiener*, the *Sturm-marsch*, and other waltzes and galops which Strauss and Labitzky composed when the *deux-temps* was first introduced; then came the rapid Fire-fly Polka, and then the tender Olga Waltz, of which poor Albert Smith was so fond, and to which he wrote such touching words; and then the quaint Swiss quadrille, and the rattling Post-horn Galop; and with them such memories of poor, vain, kindly-hearted Jullien, and blunt, honest Koenig, and many other friends of that time, all now dead and gone, that I was glad when my hostess closed the piano, and I could walk away wondering whether those days were really not very remote, or whether there had been some mistake about the dating of my birth, and I had really seen more than thirty years pass over my head.

Which reflection, recurring to me again as I lie broad awake, and connecting itself with the boy-picture, to which my attention is again accidentally directed, makes me remember that although the original of that portrait is strangely altered, that lines are marked on his face, and a beard grown on his chin, yet that there is a member of the family, at that time of course unborn and unthought of, who is now rapidly growing into a fac-simile of the portrait, and that there are two others who bid fair to follow suit in a very few years. I suppose there are few men who, having married early in life, find themselves surrounded by a family at a time when most of their compeers are yet unsettled, but have felt astonishment at their position, and a curious difficulty in exactly understanding how it came about. Tom, Jack, and Harry are chums “ about town,” belonging to the same club, move in the same set, are constantly in each other’s

chambers, flirt with the same girls, get into the same pecuniary scrapes, and generally share and share alike. Suddenly Tom, by no means the most susceptible, falls in love, sinks over head and ears, and becomes "engaged." Jack and Harry give him up at once—and rightly; an engaged man is no company for any one but his betrothed; but when he gets married, and might be fitted for society again, he gives them up. Tom accepts his new position, and thinks many of his old associates' notions shy and loose; he endues himself with quiet respectability, as with a garment, on his wedding-day, and continues to wear it ever after. I don't say that he is one whit less jolly, but it is in a more solid fund-holding manner. He admits bachelors to his pleasant dinner-table; but they are seldom those whom he knew in his bachelorhood,—rather, younger men, who will look up to him, and envy him, and think how they would like to go and do likewise. He meets Jack and Harry sometimes in the street, but does not exchange more than a nod. There is nothing in common between them: they are going on with the old round—the club-dinners, the ballet-balls, the smoking-room chit-chat, the night-houses, &c.; while Tom is paterfamilias, householder, church-goer, and head of the family. They are all coeval, and yet what a difference is there in their positions! what trials and triumphs are his, what hopeful anxieties, what troubled joys, of which they can know nothing! I will take care that in that famous uncompleted novel, of which I spoke anon, justice is done to the young husband and father, and that he is presented to the world in his proper light; at present he is but known in the Valentine-artist's view of him, as a wretched individual in a short night-dress, rocking a cradle or dandling a squalling infant. And yet there seems to be something not entirely ludicrous in the thought of a yet young man—not a milk-sop, not a spooney, but preserving his activity, his independence, his—well, his muscular Christianity—loving his wife, and devoted to his growing children. He has a new life, which his old chums cannot understand; but he understands it, and is grateful for it, and loves it better than any he lived before.

Words, just now written in recording these experiences of my lying "broad awake," rise in my mind, and recall the thoughts generated in my wakefulness by the recollection of the Census paper recently filled up. The "Head of the Family!" it is the first time I have appeared publicly in that important position; it is not the first time by thousands that I have thought over the fact, and wondered and grieved at it. The last time the Census was taken, I was returned in it as the "Son" of the house, and was probably as careless, as jovial, as thoughtless a ne'er-do-weel as figured in the books of the Registrar-General. I do not grieve for that bygone time, I do not regret it; I know that my present life is happier, and I sincerely trust that it and its aspirations are better and higher. But since that time—indeed, not many months since—death has passed through my doors, and one "without whose life I had not been" has been taken from me. How many thousands of us are in this position! it

is but poor consolation to think that hundreds who read this paper will probably be able to understand and to sympathise with the feelings of its writer. For more than a score of years you have looked up with reverence to one being; wearied with the buffets of the world, you have come to her for comfort; distracted with divers counsels, you have sought her for that clear, calm advice which purity of heart and singleness of purpose never failed to produce; in your trouble you looked to her for consolation, in your hour of triumph your first thought was that her cheek would be flushed, her eye fired by your success! That is all past and gone; the end has arrived, and you have bravely—as bravely as you could—accepted Providence's will. And yet you do not half comprehend it. Still every action of your life is tinged with some notion of her; you cannot quit yourself of the idea that even the very work on which you are engaged will, if successful, give her pleasure. You still think of her as the guardian of your childhood, the guide of your manhood, your refuge in all vexed questions and distress; and then—then you find that she at whose “dear knee you proffered vows” in earliest youth, she to whose precept and example all that may be good within you is due, is gone, and that you are the “head of the family,” and answerable to Heaven for the beat or warping of the minds of those springing up around you.

A solemn thought! A subject fraught with tears and heart-burnings, and bitter regrets of past time misapplied and vanished love perhaps not sufficiently appreciated; and yet a thought, working its own good in its own season—

“Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,
Who ne'er the mournful midnight hours
Weeping upon his bed has sate,
He knows you not, ye Heavenly Powers!”

Soul-purifying, soul-ennobling, and content-bringing, come such thoughts in the dead watches of the night. Visions of the dear ones, “not lost but gone before,” rise before us, soothing the troubled spirit.

“‘Mortal!’ they seem to say,
‘Peace to thy heart:
We too, yes mortal,
Have been as thou art.
Hope-lifted, doubt-depressed,
Seeing in part,
Tried, troubled, tempted,
Sustained as thou art!’”

Happy he whose broad-awake fit is over, and who falls again into peaceful slumber, under the influence of such happy thoughts.

E. Y.

The Real and the Conventional Nigger.

My impressions of the American negro, derived from a recent tour in the slave states, differ, I must premise, considerably from those of the amiable and well-intentioned Mrs. Stowe. That lady's fictitious Uncle Tom I found to be quite the antipodes of the real ragged Uncle Ned of the Louisiana cotton-grounds and the Carolina rice-fields. Edward's skull is much thicker than Thomas's; his nerves are of a far ropier texture. But I also must needs, in common honesty, confess that I found the aforementioned aged Uncle Ned, with the scanty wool on the occiput, and the ever-ready tambourine and banjo ("O-ho!"), by no means, either, like the stage-negro; for the cotton-hoer and rice-winnower on the banks of the Savannah and Mississippi rivers is depicted, I found, in a very unsatisfactory way by the negro serenaders of our own English music-halls and streets.

I made many a search in the valley of the Lower Mississippi for my venerable Uncle Ned; but I suppose he has gone, long since, where the good niggers go, for I found him not. I learned the ways of the blacks, and studied their habits, as far as my time and opportunities would go; and I soon found what I had half expected, that in our zeal for abolition we had very much overrated the excellence and intellectual capabilities of that unlucky uncle of ours on whom the curse of Cain still falls so heavily.

I have seen the slaves of the plantations (more than a hundred at a time) at all hours, at the plough and in the cotton-house, toiling from sunrise to sunset; seen them resting at their twelve o'clock dinner; seen them come in at horn-blow, and go off to dig their gardens; seen them smart and fussy on their Saturday or Sunday holidays, or yawning at the camp-meetings; seen them at their noon-day rest; seen them, in fact, in all capacities,—as deck-hands on steamers, waiters at hotels, hog-tenders, stage-coach drivers, railway-breaksmen, plantation-cooks, grooms, carpenters, or nurses; and in all these modes of service I found evidences of one and the same race. All the heroes and heroines of our negro songs I met, far away from the footlights, soaking under a burning Mississippi sun. Yes, Dinah and Dandy Jim from Carolina, old Uncle Ned, and Old Bob Ridley; yes, even Dooden Doo, Julia Jane, and my old friends Titus and Seneca.

On the general question of slavery I am not going to enter. No one regrets its existence more than myself. Yet I think we should always remember that it is America's misfortune, not her fault; that she lives by it now, but that she did not originate it. It is not the mere money sunk in slaves that the Southerners dread giving up; they fear free negroes round them, their idleness, their thieving, and their revolt in places where they already far outnumber the whites.

The negro is not a chivalrous, religious being, with high aspirations

and an elevated moral nature. That slaves are not all Uncle Toms in forgiveness I can testify, by the token that, even while I was in New Orleans, there were several cases of blacks on the cotton-plantations turning on flogging overseers and cutting them to pieces with their cane-knives; for in spite of negro-catching dogs, whips, and chains, where the slave is treated severely these cases of wild revenge will sometimes take place. Generally speaking, I did not see or hear of cruelty to negroes; indeed, when we consider that a black is worth some three hundred pounds, and if a skilled body-servant or mechanic five hundred pounds; that if let out, he can bring to his master at least thirty dollars a month clear of all expenses,—it is easy to understand that even a planter of the most irrestrainable passions will not often venture to mutilate or injure property so valuable to him, any more than a cruel English farmer would shoot his hunter for throwing him, or for shying at a mile-stone. Legree, I am inclined to think, is a mere nightmare, impossible at the present day.

The negro I found to be every where (with few exceptions) a mere grown-up child,—the very essence of good humour, faithful where he was attached, sometimes religious, but more often sensual, gluttonous, thievish, and hopelessly lazy. Generally speaking, the American black has a profound contempt for “Dem nasty darn’d Abolitionists,” and has no more wish for either social or moral elevation than the ourang-outang, or our ugly kinsman the gorilla.

The Southern negro is usually a fat, oily, laughing, thoughtless semi-savage. Give him each week his prescribed three pounds of pork, his peck of meal, quart of molasses (winter), his pound of salt, when he has swamp work his nightly glass of whisky, and he is happy. His fun is buffoonery and practical joking; his religion generally a methodism, degraded almost to fetichism. He is naturally a low order of being, and slavery keeps him so. I do not think, with all its faults, that slavery lowers the American negro; but it certainly prevents him ever wishing to be a nobler creature. Let the plantation-black set his deer-trap, snare racoons or wild turkeys, keep his fowls and hogs (half fed on stolen goods) to sell to massa at the big house, kill game for the same purpose, work moderately, and in spare time grow enough cotton to make up a bale a year, let him look after his garden, and he will be (if the overseer is kind) one of the most careless and happy creatures in the wide world. Give the blacks in addition, on certain feast-days, “a reg’lar breakdown” ball, and they are happier beings than half Eng-land, with all its freedom and religion, could furnish.

I am not saying this to defend slavery; for I think no human being is good enough to be able to use justly supreme power over another; and even if such a rare bird could be found, I find no such power ever delegated by God to man. But I say it because I think much wilful and dangerous nonsense is talked about the slave, whom Mrs. Stowe represents as perpetually praying in chains, weeping, or being whipped. I should rather draw slaves with more truth, as always idling, laughing, or

eating; and considering that they are well fed and clothed, have no taxes or other civic cares, and are seldom, if honest and industrious, ill-treated, I do not see why they should not eat and laugh, especially as their small brains seem almost incapable of higher pleasures.

It was my last week in New York, and I was taking a mournful farewell of gay Broadway, which I had so much frequented.

It was a bright day, and the sky was of a soft burning hue, like a sapphire on fire, as if there were light and heat within the sky, and glowing through it. The street was alive with white omnibuses, flying about like winged caterpillars; heavy barouches, driven by negro coachmen, were bearing about in their great open bowls nosegays of Fifth-Avenue ladies, and other beautiful and favourable specimens of the upper ten thousand, whom the New-York rowdy calls "the codfish aristocracy." Now and then, with a sudden clash and cannonade of cymbals and drums, a swinging band of volunteer firemen, in red flannel shirts and black leather helmets, marched down the centre of the street, dragging along a cannon, and clearing a way for themselves through every impediment as they passed, shouting on. Across the road, suspended from ropes passed from window to window, swung enormous red election-banners, blazoned with "Vote for Lincoln!" "Free soil!" "Free speech!" "Free men and free labour!" and other hortatory mottoes. The side-ways were crowded with negro masons and whitewashers, loafers, Cuban ladies, Southern gentlemen passing to and from their hotels, and the usual ebb and flow of city life.

I have just been admiring one of those marble palaces of shops (stores) that are the pride of Broadway, when, turning round suddenly to avoid a swift "spider-wagon" on its way to the beautiful Central Park, my eye falls on the window of a music-shop, and remains riveted there. I see the pale, corpse-like plaster cast, taken after death, of Rice, the celebrated American low-comedian, who some five-and-twenty years ago came over to England and delighted thousands by "jumping Jim Crow," in imitation of the eccentricities and drolleries of the Negroes on the Southern plantations. I remember, as a little puny boy, with a circular fluted frill around my neck, being taken to the Adelphi to see that stage-lion of the day. I remember it by the same token that I ingeniously contrived to jam my middle finger into the hinge of the door of the hackney-coach, which pained me so much that I cried for ten minutes. I can still perfectly recollect, however, the pain seeming to ooze and fade off as I smelt the sawdust of the box-stairs, and saw the dim green curtain mysteriously shrivel up and pass away. Shall I ever forget that rude Caliban dance of that comic Othello, with his kicks, sprawls, and stamps, and over all the sense of intense animal gambolling and fun?

And here, so many years after, I leap the gulf of time, and meet my Yorick again—the fellow of "infinite jest," the very king of Ethiopia, the discoverer of the sable serenaders' country—quite chapfallen. There is the round droll forehead, once so luminous and oily with fun,—there

the red nose, now pinched and thin, and "sharp as a pin,"—there the dull compressed mouth, that used to seem corked up to keep in the fun that else would bubble over and overflow all the flat domains of gravity. There was the Yorick of my vanished youth frozen into plaster; grim and white, he stares amid the "Silvershoe Polka," and the "Rattlesnake Jig," "My lovely Sarah Jane," "Old Bob Ridley, oh! oh! oh!" and romantic coloured lithographs of Venetian gondolas and cosmeticised fairies looking out of bowers of roses. O son of the morning, how art thou fallen! Where be thy gibes now? Is it to this plaster complexion, then, O Rice (*zideo*), that we must all come at last?

Appended to the grim bust of this once laughter-moving man, was a short notice describing the origin of negro entertainments. It appears that, some quarter of a century ago, Rice, an unknown low-comedian (for Burton and Booth were the magnates then), happening to be at Vicksburg, was much amused by the antics and extemporaneous dances of a negro porter he saw on the quay. Jim Crow, for that was the name of the "character," became henceforward his ideal of fun. He watched his tricks, learnt them thoroughly, and then by degrees introduced them on the stage. They succeeded beyond expectation; the humour took, and negro buffoonery became from that time an "institution" in America. From thence it soon spread to England, where I, in my frill, humbly assisted, as I have already shown, in its inauguration. From that time till the present the Atlantic, although a broad place, has been incessantly covered with fleets of banjo-players. Yes; for years the Atlantic surges have ceaselessly echoed with the clatter of the resounding bones, and the darkies have daily invaded us, in numbers almost as numerous as the Danes of old, to take tithe and toll of our dominion.

The "Jim Crow dance," the "Don't you cry, Susannah," and the "Jim along, Josie," that even our great singers attempted, soon gave place to better tunes and more extravagant recitatives and "walk rounds;" till now the Bryant Minstrels have become as great standards in New York as our own Buckstone and Robson in London. Their names are known from Maine to California; and so celebrated are the brothers, that they originate half the street-sayings and street-aphorisms of New York. Those extraordinary utterances of our own urchins—

"There you go with your eye out!"

"All serene!" or,

"Hurrah, boys! here's another guy!"

the serenaders have rivalled with—

"How does your meerschaum colour?"

"You're a good man, but you can't keep an hotel!"

Moreover, when we consider the pathos and local associations of such songs as "The old Kentucky shore," and "Take me to old Virginny," the martial fire of "The Maid of Montherhe," and the fun of "Old Bob Ridley," it is impossible to over-estimate the influence of the rude ballad-music that has set so many thousands of people singing, entering into the

memories and enlisting the sympathies of the entire people of a great continent.

I was not satisfied with merely buying the negro song-books and attending the negro entertainments in the Northern States, but in Charleston and New Orleans I went nightly to the theatre, being anxious to watch the effect of the songs on the slave part of the audience, and being desirous also to see what special modifications actors introduced when side by side with the negro they attempted, however conventionally, to depict.

What were the modifications that arose under these circumstances I will relate. Having first bought my song-books at 120 Tchoupitoulas Street, New Orleans, I made my way the first night through the quaint French quarter of the town to the theatre, past tropical gardens, where the banana flung forth over me its green arched leaves. Taking my seat in a front box, I scanned the house eagerly. There are two curious features about the economy of Southern theatres. The one is, that a certain gallery is set apart for ladies alone; they appear in sumptuous yellow satin and rose-coloured silks, the dark-eyed quadroons wearing curious semi-Oriental head-dresses, and the Spanish ladies, from Havannah, black lace mantillas. There is also always, on the opposite side, a special gallery for the negroes.

About the rest of the house there is nothing remarkable, except that in the best boxes there are generally some over-dressed cotton-planters, who have come to New Orleans for the season; and that in the pit, which is never curtailed or encroached on as it is in England, the people seem more independent and careless in dress and gesture than we are, more excitable, more choleric; and there is generally a rough, chivalrous Texan or two, in huge felt hat, and breeches tucked inside his boots. Perhaps, down to the very ladies, there is not, either, a person in the house who does not carry a knife, stiletto, or pistol; for New Orleans is dangerous at night, and assassinations are only too common.

Now let me look well at the black roses, the nosegay of negroes; there they are in their pen, for the Southerner, unless it is his own slave or body-servant, affects to be so sensitive as not to be able even to bear the distant aroma of a negro; indeed I have heard Southern gentlemen say so aloud at *tables d'hôte*, when black waiters were swarming round us and within earshot, for "Niggers haven't got no feeluns."

Here the darkies are in their gallery, come to hear their stage shadows describe the "feeluns" which "coloured pussons haven't no business to have." Oh, that I had my colours and palette here to take notes of all the shades of sepia, yellow-brown, and Indian-ink that I see in that negro gallery in New-Orleans Theatre! Colours! yes, all tints of brown and yellow, from the colour of black coffee with plenty of milk to the colour of black coffee undiluted altogether; red lips, gray lips, lips of all degrees of swelling; hair of all kinds of curl and lankiness; Ashantee men and Hottentot men; West-Indian blacks and sallow, vivacious, and vicious-

looking mulattoes, with yellow and bloodshot whites to their jet-dark eyes. Dresses, too, there are of all kinds, from striped cottonade jacket and dirty linen paletots to clean blue-cloth suits. One or two of the negroes, I see, are dressed extravagantly smart.

A Texan man next me told me a story of sleeping in a log-hut in Florida, so small that he had to put his legs out at the window, and when he awoke early in the morning, he says, he found that all the cocks and hens of the neighbourhood were roosting on them with the utmost composure.

After laughing at this, I opened my book of Plantation Melodies, and found by the introduction that a Mr. Christy, of Philadelphia, originally a clerk in New Orleans, afterwards nigger and actor in a circus caravan, started the first band of Ethiopian Minstrels in 1841, by which he soon was enabled to clear thirty thousand dollars a year. Mr. Christy, the first, not the last, of the minstrels, studied negro humour originally at the negro feasts on Congo Green, New Orleans, and also when acting as superintendent of negro workmen in a New-Orleans rope-walk.

Ere I had well digested this and the preceding anecdote, the curtain drew up, and I beheld the black minstrels, dressed in complete evening dress, ranged in a semicircle on the stage; the two comic niggers with huge collars, the end men on either flank, the one a perfect player on the tambourine, the other a grand performer upon the bones. In the centre of all was the leader, the beginner of all the comic conversations, and the chief tenor singer. About the singing of the sentimental songs, which brought all the negro faces to the front of the gallery, there was nothing especially marked, except the absorbed enjoyment of the black audience. Indeed, the sentimental songs had nothing peculiarly negroish about them. One of them was about

"On a stormy night in winter,
When the winds blew cold and wet;"

and another concerning

"The little beauty, Belle Brandon,
That we met 'neath the old arbour-tree,"—

mere love-songs and regrets for the dead, in fact, with no local colour in them, or any thing especially individual; but beautifully sung, by voices as clear as the mocking-bird's, and mellow sweet as the thrushes' piping at cherry-time.

But the third song was worth recording for several reasons. It was entitled, in my little blue book of Plantation Melodies from Tchoupitoulas Street,

"Let me kiss him for his mother."

It was written upon a young clerk from the state of Maine, who died of yellow fever at New Orleans. The poor lad perished alone and among strangers, and was buried by them. The funeral service was over, and the mutes were about to close the coffin, according to Southern custom,

when an old woman knelt down and said, "Let me kiss him for his mother!"—beautiful and tender words, worthy of a better immortality than that a negro serenader could confer. During the Prince's visit to Canada this song became very popular, from some lady parodying it at a ball-room, in allusion to her royal partner. The joke of "Let us kiss him for his mother" was probably repeated some millions of times during that auspicious visit to America.

As the comic songs began, "Yah, yah!" and the great tambourinist beat his head with the tight-strained parchment, I soon ceased to laugh, and fell to thinking over the words of the songs, the lessons they seemed to teach, and the peculiar spirit pervading them. It required no very deep research to see that the planters were more thought of than the slaves when these songs were written. One could easily understand from reading them how it was that this negro music was tolerated, and was even popular in the slave states.

The songs all paint the plantations as rejoicing (as I fully believe many, perhaps even most all, of them thoughtlessly do) under the patriarchal and happy institution. One song, called the "Night Funeral of a Slave," represents the slaves chanting a hymn as they bear a fellow-negro to his grave at night (not to lose working-time, I suppose), "with pine torches blazing." But the funeral waits, because, all the slaves say, "Massa must come and see him before they close poor John's grave;" to which massa replies in the following high-pitched verse:

" A Christian more humble there's not in the land,
A heart that was kinder to man was ne'er given.
I stood by his death-bed, and took his cold hand;
The last words he spoke were, 'Oh, meet me in heaven!'
He [massa] laid his soft hand on that cold icy brow,
And dropped on the pillow a warm manly tear;
Then said, 'If like him we would try to live now,
In death we should, like him, have nothing to fear.' "

I need not say that this touching and, I have no doubt, often true picture of the relationship between slave and master is not from the hand of Mrs. Beecher Stowe.

If the runaway negro is ever introduced, he is shown us as miserable, neglected, and longing to return to "massa," as so many foolish and misguided runaway slaves have done. For instance:

" To Canada old John was bound,
All by de railway underground:
He's got no clothes, he's got no tin,
He wishes he were back agin."

So says he, Give me Dixie's land, where I can work all day with hoe and shubble, and dance all night to the banjo bright.

If a negro insurrection is spoken of in these songs, it is only to show us Pompey, the leader, dead in the swamp among the cypress-trees, with the skeeters humming over him, the lightning-bugs (fire-flies) flashing, and the plantation watch-dog in the distance howling his requiem.

If Aunt Dinah dies, massa is always complimented for weeping for her. Indeed, massa is idealised in a thousand ways. Many a time I have, indeed, myself seen the tears rise in black people's eyes at the plaintive dirge of "Massa's in the cold, cold ground," of which the last verse is :

"Massa made the darkeys love him,
He always was so kind ;
Now they sadly weep above him,
Mourning, for he'll leave them behind.
I cannot work before to-morrow,
So many tear-drops flow ;
I try to drive away my sorrow,
Picking on the old banjo."

But now comes in Uncle Ned, in an enormous check shirt, with collars as large as dinner-plates, sloughy top-boots, a limp, dirty, nan-keen tail-coat that sweeps the ground, and an enormous broken-in white hat that hangs down in a bag. It is on this he will presently imitate the accordion. Now he limps and shuffles round the stage in comic decrepitude ; now he totters along with his banjo, picking at the strings, and making his palsy and other infirmities ten times more amusing than any one else's agility and grace ; now he slides into a clog hornpipe, or throws off his shoes and gives us an absurd "pigeon's wing ;" then presently he dances it with variations, and lastly on his knees, beating time with his forehead on the stage. Billows of hoarse laughter break from the real negroes in the gallery. They enjoy all the jokes upon their tender shins, thick heads, unsavoury skins, blubber lips, ugly faces, and long heels. They are mere animals, and as animals are easily made happy. A full manger and idleness makes them merry as animal nature can be.

But to leave the theatre and wander off to the black race of America in general, I must confess that I every where found reason for liking the negroes. I was won by their almost childish and redundant good-humour, their easily-purchased fidelity, their wish to please, their healthy buffoonery, and their joyous, careless contentment with a dependent and often not very enviable life. I have them now in my mind's eye by dozens : waiters, pacing the marble-paved halls of the great Southern hotels, or buzzing round me at Southern *tables d'hôte* ; as sailors, I see their laughing, kindly faces resting over steam-gangways, or peering, with kind anxiety, into my sleeping-berth ; I see them bending over the cotton, or dragging at bales on the Ohio or St. Louis rivers ; I remember them toiling cheerfully under loads of resinous pine-knots, or wielding the axe in the pine-woods of Florida ; I see again their beaded eyes glisten at the sight of a 'possum or a "sweet meated" coon. Every where I beheld a kindly race, that even subjection cannot render unhappy ; so mercurial is their torrid blood, so compensating the cheerfulness that ever-kind Nature has given the unlucky race in return for so much hard labour (on the *sic vos non vobis* principle),—labour, too, that has no future but a possible freedom, purchasable quite in old age.

For Better, for Worse.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE Redenham carriage, which took Philip into Leigh, was to return with Barbara, who was expected by the afternoon train from town. Ethelind, full of doubt and fear, had been vainly striving to forget her expected presence, until her arrival actually took place. She had gone into the housekeeper's room, and encountered that exceedingly disagreeable domestic, and she had wandered over the large rambling galleries and corridors of the old house with Martha, the only female domestic remaining of those who had lived there in the old baronet's time. Ethelind had learnt this fact, first from Valerie, who had taken wonderfully to Martha amidst her new associates in the servants' hall; and afterwards from Stephen, when she had turned to him for some information about the rooms which once belonged to Miss Leigh, and, greatly to the disgust of Mrs. Blake, had desired that Martha should be sent up to her own room.

"Any body in the world med see with half a high," Mrs. Blake exclaimed, as Martha left the servants' hall to wait upon her young mistress, "she's no lady! Who she was 'eaven only knows! I don't. But would the Marchioness of Liddington, do you think, have condescended to consort with housemaids, and them sort of people indeed? not she!" and Mrs. Blake put her hands on her hips, and tossed up her head with a jerk, and decided in her own mind, that if her ladyship meant to draw out of plain honest Martha, who would go her own way, in spite of her taunting, trick-making, thoughtless companions, the secret doings of the servants' hall, she would soon convince her who was the strongest at Redenham, in spite of them all.

Ethelind was lingering in the hall, admiring the stained-glass windows, and the groined roof, and the bright armour, and lingering over the large baskets of lilies of the valley, peeping out of their deep mossy beds, which the gardener had been placing under the windows, when Barbara alighted from the carriage. "Well! who would have thought of my being here so soon," she said, "when we parted last week, Lady Leigh? I suppose I ought to feel very grateful to you for sending for me, for one always takes it as a sort of a compliment to be wanted; but I am not quite sure I should not have come after all, even if no invitation had arrived. I have a little private business with Philip, who, I hear from Robert, is at Leigh. Well, by and by will do for that. But how do you get on? What do you think of Redenham? Really, between Simpson and the architect, and Snell, and a score more clever people Philip employed, the old place is so renovated and smartened I should hardly know it."

Ethelind drew Barbara into the morning-room; but she was far too active and busy a spirit to be quiet any where long. "And so you are going to have a houseful of guests? Who have you invited?" she asked. "Come, let me see your list." And as Ethel laid it before her, and she ran her eye over the names, commenting on one and the other lightly, and setting her veto on this family and that, she quite bewildered her hostess.

"But from what I could gather from the few people I have seen, the Barclays and the Hibberts are very nice people," Ethelind ventured to say timidly, as she saw Barbara drawing her pencil through their names.

"Good people!" she exclaimed, with her own ringing laugh; "yes, to be sure they are,—all the world is good, if it comes to that—these people especially; but that has nothing in the world to do with it. They are not in our set."

"But Lady Gwynne visits them I know, and thinks very highly of them," Ethel replied stoutly, determined, if she could, to convince Barbara she meant to have her own way.

"My dear little unsophisticated sister, you do not understand, that whatever vagaries Lady Gwynne pleases to commit, can be no rule at all for you. A man may be as rich as Croesus, and his wife and daughters patterns of wisdom and goodness, and all that sort of thing; but if they do not belong to your set, you can have nothing to do with them. By and by, perhaps, when you are more experienced, you, like Lady Gwynne, may venture to make a few exceptions to the general rule; but certainly you must not venture on so hazardous a step at present. It is not wealth, or beauty, or title, remember; it is blood! pure, unmixed, patrician blood. Without that, no one is eligible to be placed on your visiting-list."

Ethelind saw clearly it would require a stout heart to enter into combat with Barbara for the mastery of her own affairs.

"Now, perhaps, you would like to see your rooms. Will you let me take you up-stairs?" Ethelind said, anxious to turn the subject. "Philip, I believe, brings home a few gentlemen to night from the meeting, and Lady Gwynne and her daughter are here. To-morrow the house will be fuller."

"Then you have invited your friends!" Barbara exclaimed, with a disappointed look. "I thought Philip told me in his note you waited until I came to you."

The colour mounted up into Ethelind's face. "A great many people have called on us," she replied; "and as Philip said they were old friends of the family, it seemed scarcely worth while bringing you so far to send out a few invitations. As it is probable there will be an election, and Philip is so interested in politics, I think you will be able to help me in making Redenham pleasant to his party."

"Well, upon my word, I did not give you credit for so much spirit;

Redenham has wonderfully improved you!" Barbara said, as they went up the staircase together. But Barbara was not going quietly to her own room. She would see Ethel's own suite of apartments; fell into ecstasies over their arrangement and effect; commented on all the pretty things which so lavishly adorned them; stood in admiration over the winding staircase to the conservatory, with its light gilded balusters, covered with the brightest creepers; ran lightly down them to gather a nosegay for herself for the evening, and then came back, determined to go the round of the long corridor.

"And these were Ann's rooms formerly. What have they made of them, I wonder?" she asked, as she laid her hand on the lock of a door opening into a circular turret at the western extremity of the castle.

"Please do not go there!" Ethelind exclaimed, in a nervous, uncomfortable tone. "It is left just as it used to be, and I have given strict orders that no one goes there but old Martha. I mean to have every thing cleaned and renewed; so that when Ann comes to us she may take possession of them, if she pleases."

"Well, upon my word, Lady Leigh, you are a most extraordinary person," Barbara exclaimed. "It's my belief you would be doing Ann a far better service in having every trace of the old place swept away. In the second, I doubt very much your ever getting her here; and certainly, if I had been in your place, she is the last person I should desire to have under my roof."

"I am sure I cannot think why," Ethelind exclaimed, with more spirit than she had hitherto expressed. "Next to my own sisters, I have never met any one who has so pleased me as Miss Leigh. I feel as if I had known her all my life; and I could go to her for advice as freely almost as to Margaret."

"Poor little thing!" Barbara said provokingly. "So your lord and master has not thought fit to open his heart to his child-wife, and lay bare the secrets of his bachelor-life; and as I shall not venture to forestall him in his revelations, I will go back now to my own room, and see what progress Elize has made in her preparations for my dressing for dinner."

Ethelind watched her retreating figure, as she went dancing and skipping gracefully down the corridor, until she was out of sight; and then, throwing herself down on one of the cushioned seats in a large oriel window, she gazed long and wistfully on the lovely valley, clothed in its tender green, until it stretched up from the quiet waters of the lovely mere, which lay before her, reflecting the bright blue sky and green trees in its clear bosom, to the purple hills which rose abruptly behind it.

"And what could be the strange mystery which enshrouded that poor crippled daughter of their house, which they all kept so jealously from her. Did it concern her? Could she have come between Philip and Ann in any way? and if so, why had Philip sought her out? Surely, if she was such a sufferer, and had been, by their own acknowledgment,

for so many years, she could in no way interfere with her comfort or happiness, unless, indeed, it might be inasmuch as until now Redenham had remained entirely deserted since the sad blow which had made Philip its possessor. And satisfied at last that she had unravelled the mystery, and seeing by her watch that it was already time her guests should arrive, Ethelind rose up from her seat, and with a feeling of nervous excitement at encountering Barbara's sallies, as well as heading her own table for the first time to a large dinner-party, she went into her room to commence her hurried toilet.

Philip returned home so late, he only came into the drawing-room just before dinner was announced; but he watched Ethelind receive her guests, and take the head of his table, and though he could not hear what she said, he knew by her animated face she was joining in the conversation. Stephens, too, who had taken a wonderful interest in his young and gentle mistress, and who had already written an indignant letter to Mrs. Edwards at the goings-on of Mrs. Blake, who was, he said, trying her best to frighten and overrule his lady in every thing, hovered about her chair, and placed the dishes so that she should require the least help, and did her more silent benefit than even Ethelind herself was at the time aware of. Barbara, whose keen, sharp eyes were every where, could but inwardly acknowledge, that if their brother had stepped out of the prescribed path in marrying out of his own set, they had no vulgarity to dread in their new sister-in-law, and that the natural grace (if it could not be right training) she possessed made her readily adapt herself to her altered position, and perform her part admirably. The dinner, to her critical eye, was as bad as bad could be. This she attributed to Lady Leigh's entire ignorance of what was right and proper. She did not think for a moment that Ethelind had no more power over her *cuisine* than if she had never entered her own kitchen, or given any orders at all. Lady Gwynne, who sat by Philip, was in raptures over the youth and beauty of her young hostess; for though herself plain, and possessed of three intelligent, highly-educated, but decidedly plain, daughters, she was keenly alive to beauty and grace, whether in connection with art or nature; and the child-like simplicity and shrinking beauty of Ethelind had strangely won on the strong good sense and right feeling of the warm motherly heart. And while she would, as a matter of rule, have deprecated the equivocal step Philip had taken, she yet in her own Welsh obstinacy applauded him for maintaining his own right to act against the strong prejudices of his weaker-minded mother and sisters; though, in her inmost heart, she dreaded the ordeal his young wife must pass through before she would fairly establish herself in her rightful position.

"You must take care of that young wife of yours, Sir Philip," she said; "she will be the leading beauty of the season, depend upon it. And it would be a thousand pities that the purity and freshness of her mind should be disturbed by the admiration she is sure to excite. If you are

immersed in politics, and leave her to make her way as best she can, you will be throwing her into great temptation."

"I shall put her under good care, Lady Gwynne, depend upon it. You forget my mother and sisters will be close to us."

"They will be very kind, no doubt," her ladyship said, somewhat doubtfully; "but you must remember, a wife cannot take all at once to her husband's relations. She clings naturally to her own people, especially if she is young and timid, like Lady Leigh; and, cut off from them, who else but her husband can she look to to shield and guard her in those thousand little difficulties and dangers which beset the path of every pretty woman. You must excuse my blunt Welsh manners in volunteering you advice, Sir Philip," she said, as she saw the blood mount up into his face; "we are too old friends for you to take umbrage at an old woman's fidgets, if they turn out nothing more; and you will forgive them, in consideration of her being herself a mother, if not of pretty daughters, at all events of good and true ones." She did not wait for Philip's reply; she saw that Ethelind was growing hot and nervous at making the move into the drawing-room, and she instantly rose up with a bright smile, to relieve and reassure her by herself leading the way.

Oppressed by a nervous headache from over-excitement, Ethelind was not sorry to follow her guests up-stairs to bed. She had already begun to learn the uselessness of waiting up until Philip made his appearance, so she dismissed Valerie when she had completed her undressing, and soon afterwards fell into a sound slumber. Not so Barbara. Telling Elize she should not require her services, and waiting until she heard the two or three gentlemen who were sleeping in the house pass her door, she took up her candle, and, with a shawl wrapped round her shoulders, quietly descended the stairs, and crossed the hall to the library. She tapped at the door, but, without waiting for the word of admission from Philip, opened it and stood beside her brother's chair. He was sitting in a brown study over the fire, and almost started at Barbara's unexpected presence.

"Why, Barbara! I thought you were in bed an hour ago. What in the world brings you down here at this time of night?" he exclaimed. "Is there any thing the matter with Ethel?"

"Ethelind! no. What a worry you are always in about her! She's in bed and asleep long ago. You seem to have made yourself very comfortable here, Master Philip," Barbara said, as she came up and stood before his bright fire, and gazed at herself in the glass over the mantel-shelf, and arranged the red geraniums in her dark hair. "But early days, is it not," she added provokingly, "to be sitting up at night after your old fashion, and leaving the little 'lady' alone to while away the first hours of the night? I see you are like the rest of your sex, 'To one thing constant never;'—now, don't be angry; I mean no reflections. I only want to talk seriously to you for a few minutes, and then I will

release you from my presence." And she threw herself down on the easy-chair opposite, and spread out her white muslin dress, and put her little satin *bottines* on the fender, utterly regardless of the not over-gracious reception her brother vouchsafed to give her. "Now, you think it was entirely your invitation which brought me here, Philip; but I can assure you you were never more mistaken. It is a matter of more importance than playing the part of duenna to your wife—who, however, let me tell you, seems very unwilling to accept my services. Have you heard lately from the Cliffords?"

"The Cliffords? Yes. I heard through somebody,—you, or my mother, or Simpson, perhaps, that he was ill, and had gone abroad for a couple of years. But what of them?" Philip asked nervously; for, to tell the truth, the hasty way in which he had lost his temper with Ethelind, and the foolish part he had acted on Sunday, had made him feel very much like a man not altogether in the best humour with himself.

"Well, Ann corresponds every now and then with Mrs. Clifford, and in a letter the day before yesterday she mentions that they had been offered the chaplaincy at Naples; and she feels so sure it would prolong Mr. Clifford's life to remain some years abroad, she had almost persuaded him to accept it, if they could prevail on you to give the living to the present curate. Now it struck us, that as soon as Ethelind knew it was vacant, she would naturally enough urge you to appoint her brother, who, I think she said, was in orders. So, to avoid the unpleasant necessity of a refusal, we think you might safely venture to promise it to poor Di's unfortunate Lothario, Arthur Langton."

"Arthur Langton! my dear Barbara, you must have lost your wits. Why, what on earth could the fellow think, but that Di repented her rejection of him, and was now asking him in the civilest way possible to come forward again! It is no light matter, let me tell you, young lady, trifling with a man's feelings in that way, and I for one will have no hand in it."

"Bless me! what virtuous indignation you display all at once! As if Diana had not a right to change her mind if she chose!"

"She had far better have known it at first, I think," Philip said petulantly. "She would have saved herself trouble, and Langton too. I would have her think well before she commits such a piece of egregious folly. Remember, she could not do otherwise than accept him, if he proposes again."

"At all events, you can never say a word to Di, or any body else, against mixed marriages," Barbara said, in a cool, mocking tone, with her large black eyes bent steadily on her brother's white face. "With your laudable example before her, it is natural she should begin to doubt the wisdom of her late decision. However, you need not distress yourself unnecessarily; I am not at all sure she would wish to have that old sore reopened; I am not sure she does not see the evils entailed by such folly and weakness, more plainly in your case than she ever would have

done, perhaps, in her own. We only proposed it as—first, a sort of retributive justice to poor Langton for all the misery Di caused him; and, secondly, to relieve you from what may prove a very annoying and perplexing difficulty.”

“And who is the curate, think you, Mr. Clifford is so very anxious to serve?” Philip asked, with a flashing eye, all his old enmity returning upon him in full flood, under the lash of Barbara’s foolish tongue. “I did not know it until last Friday, when Simpson, in speaking of him and what he had done in the parish, mentioned his name. Of course I knew at once it must be Ethelind’s half-brother; but I must own I felt desperately angry in being actually bearded in my own den. There was such a want of common good breeding,—such an absence of all right feeling towards Ethel herself, thus to push himself into a place of all others so very objectionable,—that I freely allow it gave me a very bad opinion of the family, and I am now, more than ever, determined to cut them altogether.”

“Then, as it turns out, my proposition comes at the right time,” Barbara said, with evident satisfaction at her own wisdom and forethought; “for of course Ethelind will be put up to worrying you into giving it to her brother, the moment they hear Mr. Clifford is going to resign.”

“I don’t know about Ethel,” Philip replied musingly. “I think she begins to feel already, that having one’s relations so near you adds very little to your domestic comfort. The parishioners will wish it, I am prepared to believe; for, turn where I will, or speak to whom I will, they are all equally full of praise of what Atherton has done for them since he has been here. The fellow is hard-working and zealous, I have no doubt; and certainly he preaches a good sermon. I have seldom, if ever, heard a better than he gave us on Sunday; and if it had not been for this confounded connection with Ethelind, I would as gladly have given the living to him,—more so, indeed, than to any body else I know.”

“Well, now, having enlightened you on the subject of my mission to Redenham, I suppose I may take myself off,” Barbara said, slowly rising from her chair, and proceeding to relight her candle. “I don’t think her ladyship did amiss to-day; she got through the honours of the table better than one could have expected from such a child; but I can’t say as much for her dinner. My gracious, Philip, it was well mamma was not here; her propriety would have been utterly confounded at such a profusion of uneatables. You really must try and instil into Ethelind that she has not fallen among cormorants; neither do we exist entirely on cold soup maigre, or flabby half-boiled salmon.”

“And who, I should like to know, am I to thank for such an atrocious woman as housekeeper, but you or my mother?” Philip replied, in a tone of voice which would have quite petrified Ethel, but which only made his sister open her black eyes wider and shrug her white shoulders.

"This is the second time you have sent some ill-tempered, over-bearing servant into Ethel's service, instead of doing what I asked you. Why in the world my mother dismissed Edwards, I can't conceive. If she was a little behind the day, she had good sense enough not to attempt things she did not understand. Ethel is no more able to manage that woman, with her flaunting ribbons and finery, and her saucy tongue, than a baby."

"The truth was," Barbara said, with her eyes very meekly cast down, "mamma and the rest of us got a notion into our heads that of course Miss Atherton, the daughter of a clergyman, would have been taught all sorts of housewifery. One always has an idea that those sort of people are proverbially domestic; and, moreover, coming from Lady Liddington's, who is so very particular and *recherché*—"

"If Lady Liddington had found her good for any thing, she would never have parted from her. And if ever you or my mother favour us again with such creatures as this woman or old Frippery, I'll forbid your interfering in my household."

"Well, upon my word, you are grown very ferocious, I think, Master Philip. Neither you nor Ethel are such very bright specimens of conjugal felicity as one expected to find you. She looks thinner and paler than when she first came from Italy; and as to you—but, good night," she added hastily, "I won't wait for the storm which I see brewing, lest I should absolutely lose my head." And, taking up her candle, she went lightly up the silent stairs to her own room, leaving Philip in a towering passion with his mother and sisters, and the Athertons, and every body else.

In crossing the hall the next morning, Ethel's eye was caught by three cards lying on the marble table. They were Ralph's, Katie's, and Grace's. "Has Mr. Atherton called here?" she asked nervously of Stephens. "Yes, my lady. Mr. Atherton and two ladies called just now; walked over from the Moss, I think, for they are all great walkers, I know."

"I hope you said I was at home," Ethel said hurriedly.

"I told them you were at home, my lady; but Mr. Atherton said at once they did not intend going in. I even ventured so far as to say I thought, maybe, the ladies would need a rest; but they said no—they would leave their cards."

"And where was I at the time?" Ethel asked, foreseeing quite plainly that Philip's behaviour on Sunday had effectually barred the door to her own people.

"You were writing in the morning-room, my lady. I don't exactly know where Sir Philip was. They inquired very particularly for you, my lady." Ethelind said no more; she only passed swiftly up the stairs, and, having locked her door, eased her troubled heart by a sudden and violent burst of tears.

On Sunday, Ethelind and Lady Gwynne, and her daughters, drove

over to Leigh-Delamere to church. Philip, Barbara, and the rest of their guests, drove to Leigh. In the afternoon Ethel again found her way to church; but this time she drove herself in her pony-carriage, with Nest Gwynne as her companion. Neither morning nor afternoon had she been able to do more than give Grace and Ralph a kind look, as she left her pew. The parishioners seemed to wait for her to precede them out of church, and the rectory-pew was near the chancel, and consequently those in it were the last to leave. She could only take her seat in the carriage and drive away, as she had no plausible excuse to offer her companion for lingering in the churchyard.

In spite of her nervousness, Ethelind could not but feel she was falling gradually into her place in the stately home her husband had brought her to, and among a houseful of people utterly unknown to her. But she could not shut her eyes to the fact that a misty gulf, never dreamt of by her a short fortnight ago, had opened somewhere between her and Philip, which clouded all her pleasure, and weighed upon her like a nightmare. It was not that he was less kind,—sometimes she fancied he was more so than he had ever been,—but there was now one subject neither ventured to approach. One set of people neither ever mentioned; and if by chance they became the topics of conversation among others, both Philip and Ethelind instinctively felt that each tried in their own way to lead it away to some other. Ethelind had never dared mention the call which the Athertons had paid them; though she knew, indirectly, that Philip was aware of it. Neither had he ventured to inquire if Ralph and his wife and sister had been included in the invitations to the ball, though he had almost hoped they had, when he heard the whole neighbourhood ringing with the indefatigable labours and capital sermons of the young curate at Leigh-Delamere.

"You are very early in your dressing," Barbara said, as she came into Ethel's room; "half the people have not gone up-stairs, and I have my hair and every thing to do."

"I have not seen Philip yet," Ethel replied; "and besides, I have to receive my guests. I hope I shall not make any very stupid blunder, it will so annoy Philip, I know."

"Now, never you care about Philip; just go your own way, and leave him to his. 'Tis the worst policy in the world to be always fretting and fidgiting about your husband,—and, let me tell you, they don't like it half as well as a stout, sturdy wife who maintains her rights."

Ethelind sighed. "Perhaps not," she said sadly; "but for all that your advice sounds very hard and unnatural."

"Well! if Philip is not proud of you to-night, I am mistaken," Barbara broke out, in a more honest burst of kindness and admiration than was usual with her. And the heart must have been hard which withheld its full meed to such transparent and fragile-looking beauty as Ethelind's appeared to-night. Philip came into the large ball-

room, where Ethel was standing to take a last survey of the splendid tiers of hothouse plants, and coloured lights gleaming, out of rich wreaths of flowers, up the marble pillars and around the cornice of the lofty room. She was standing by the fireplace, beneath the soft light of a chandelier, the full white lids falling partly down over her large violet eyes, made deeper in colour by the thick fringe, which cast its shadow on her rounded cheek, while a soft halo glimmered round her head from the bandeaux of opals which bound up the deep rich coils of her golden hair. Her white rounded arms fell down upon the full folds of her mauve dress, round each of which was clasped a massive jewelled bracelet. She seemed lost in thought.

"Why, Ethie, you look a queen of the revels," Philip said, coming up to her, and almost making her start. "But I don't think you are wise to be standing about so early. You will have plenty to do by and by. Not that you must dance much, remember. The opening quadrille, I suppose; you must stand up in with Lord Marwick; but I cannot let you do more. Do you hear?"

"Yes, I hear," Ethel replied, "and, at present, I have no wish to do so. When the dancing begins, it may remind me of the first and only ball I was ever at. I will not promise what I may do then."

"Ah, that Repworth affair," Philip said. "Yes, I remember that ball well enough. I danced with you then, Ethie. My last dance, I suppose. I hardly knew what I was about that night. All I cared for was getting possession of your hand." He put his arm round her waist, and, for a moment, her head rested upon his shoulder. "Was that what you were dreaming about when I came in just now? But we are old married people now; we have lived long enough together to find out there is something else to do in the world besides dreaming one's life away. The theory is, I believe, that, as the first enthusiasm of love subsides, a harder and sounder, and wholesomer state of feeling, which people designate as 'affection,' takes its place. I don't know whether the awaking from that first dream is not rather mournful, especially if the shock comes suddenly, however much more healthy the second phase of one's matrimonial experience may be. What say you, Ethie, with the little experience you have had?" And Philip looked down upon the half-closed eyelids, and the flushed cheek, and the tremulous lip, which still rested against his shoulder.

"We do not stop to ask ourselves what the future will be," Ethelind said, in a low tone, and not without some effort to keep back her tears. "Women are very weak, and very trustful; it is their nature, I suppose; and when their hearts are full, they have no desire to lift the veil which mercifully obscures the future."

Philip put his head down, and gave her the warmest kiss he had bestowed upon her since that unlucky Friday night, the week before. He turned to go away; then he came back to where Ethel was standing.

"Will the Athertons be here, do you think?" he asked.

"I don't know. I have received no reply; but I should think not. I asked them, as I thought you wished it. I hope I did right?"

"Quite," he replied. "I hope they will be here."

But Ethel, though she said nothing, sincerely hoped they would not.

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE had been a long discussion at the Rectory whether the Redenham invitations should or should not be accepted. Ralph tossed the little coloured envelope down, and walked away. He felt it was a sort of mockery, when Sir Philip had not condescended to acknowledge him in any way in his own parish.

A girlish and very natural desire seized Grace to be present at this dance, which formed the subject of conversation and speculation to the neighbourhood. She naturally longed to see her sister in her own home.

"Had Sir Philip ridden over, and said simply, 'Atherton, do as you please, come, or stay away,' I would have gone," Ralph said indignantly. "But Ralph Atherton, the curate of Mr. Clifford, the but lately Fellow of his College, the son of Ethel's father, steals into no man's house because, for very shame's sake only, he cannot be excluded. Besides," he added, cooling down from his burst of temper, "I should not dance. I gave that up when I took orders. I shall not go. At the same time, if you, Grace, can persuade Katie to chaperone you, I won't say a word against it; and, as far as that goes, if your dress stands in your way, I will give you whatever is needful for the occasion."

Grace's tearful eyes were bent on Kate. A faint remembrance flashed across her, rather unpleasantly, of a caution Margaret had given her, never in any way to come between Ethel and her husband. Would Ethel have asked her if she had not wished to see her? Could it be, after all, that Sir Philip meant nothing, and that Ralph, in his over-sensitive feelings, had needlessly taken offence? And so Grace planned and contrived, and thought it all over, and tried to close her eyes against her own long-maintained impressions of Philip's intentions towards them, which she had hitherto stoutly maintained against all arguments.

Supported by Lady Gwynne's motherly presence, to prompt her where her own knowledge of her guests failed her, Ethelind found her task by no means so arduous or difficult as she had expected; and, by the time the dancing had commenced, she had entered as thoroughly into the excitement, and joined as heartily in the gaiety, as any one in that large and brilliant party. It did Philip good to stand by, and watch her animated face, and listen to her sparkling repartee, and her soft, trilling laughter. And he could not resist asking Barbara, as they stood together for a moment, if he really had ever over-stated her beauty in describing her to them.

In spite of his calm, unmoved face, his sister's unqualified admiration gave him intense gratification.

Amongst the three hundred faces which had passed in review before her, Ethie had not recognised any one from the Rectory; and wondering whether they had indeed been too conscious of Philip's shortcomings to accept her invitation, she almost started when Stephens, in a low voice, announced "Mrs. and Miss Atherton;" and Ethelind turned and followed the servant nervously across the room to the hall.

"They are in the small ante-room, my lady," he said. "They begged to see you alone first; and I thought, my lady, I had better take them there."

"Oh, Gracie!" she said, "I had quite given you up. Why did you not come earlier? and where is Ralph? Surely he has not sent you here alone?"

"We are come, Ethie dear," Grace replied hurriedly, and with a bright colour, "only to see you! I had a feverish longing for one glimpse of you in your own home. I wanted to see you dressed, as you are to-night, in jewels and lace and velvet,—to feast my eyes upon your face, to get it all stored up in my memory; and then I think I shall be better able to settle down to my own quiet life."

Ethel laughed. "Dear Gracie," she said, "there is not much for you to see in me, I think. I am just the same 'Ethie' I have ever been. Nothing can change me, even though I do wear all this finery; but it is not a bit prettier than your pretty white dress;" and she looked at her scarcely less lovely sister, in her simple white folds of muslin.

"Grace, we ought to apologise to your sister for coming at this late hour," Katie said; "but we wished, Lady Leigh, to avoid notice. We leave early for the same reason."

"And pray, Ethie," Grace broke in, "don't come near us, or try to get us partners. Katie won't dance; and I just know enough people among your guests to have the chance of a quadrille, if I wish it. But we do not come to dance. We are here just to see you once in your own home, among your new friends."

Ethelind's colour rose at the remembrance that all these excuses should be thought needful by her sisters, who ought to have been the honoured guests in Philip's house. She was grieved to the heart that she could not—dared not—bring Philip peremptorily to forbid such a phantom visit.

"Come in with me, now," she said, "and I will introduce you to my friend Lady Gwynne; I am sure you will both like her; and Katie can sit quietly by her side while I find a partner for you."

But Grace shrank back nervously, and would not consent to what her sister urged. At this moment Barbara's voice was heard calling for Lady Leigh.

"You are wanted," Grace said. "Go—do go! dear Ethel, or you will make me repent that I came."

Again Barbara's voice reached them. "I must go," Ethel said hurriedly. "But I will tell Stephens to take you through the conservatory."

ries, and then no one will observe you." And the next minute she had disappeared.

"I wonder who that pretty girl is Heathcote is dancing with; you will see her presently, when she takes her place just opposite to us. To my mind, she is the best-looking girl in the room."

"Not very gallant of you, Lord Redcar," Barbara answered, as she took that nobleman's arm, and came and stood where she could get a better view of the dancers, "with my brother's wife, who seems to be turning the heads of all the people to-night, and myself beside you, the sole representative of the renowned 'Leigh beauty.' But she is good-looking though, I allow," she added, "now I get a better view of her face; and, upon my word, not at all unlike Lady Leigh's own style of beauty."

"Now you mention it, there is something that reminds you of her in her eyes and hair, and the expression of her face. I wonder who she is." And Lord Redcar turned round to Sir Philip Leigh's steward, who was behind them, and asked him if he could tell him who that pretty girl was dancing with Heathcote.

Oh, yes, Mr. Jones knew. What does not a shrewd active lawyer always know of every body in his neighbourhood? "It was Miss Atherton, the sister of Mr. Clifford's curate at Leigh-Delamere; the man who was doing so much good at the Moss, and who was drawing the people from all the neighbouring churches to Leigh-Delamere, to hear him preach."

Barbara started. This, then, was Ethel's sister! Could Philip know they were here? And, without waiting to hear more, she darted off into the crowd to seek out her brother, and tell him who were his guests. He was standing by the fireplace talking to some one she did not know. Barbara touched his shoulder with her fan. He turned round.

"The Athertons are here," she said, in a low voice. "Did you know it?"

Philip started. "I think not," he said; "if they had been, I must have seen them."

"They are, though. Mr. Jones knows them, and he has seen them. It is a great piece of presumption, I think, to push themselves in without an invitation."

"Who says they were not invited? Not Jones, surely?" Philip exclaimed, leading Barbara to a vacant corner.

"Ethel never said they were; how should I know?" Barbara replied angrily. "But asked or not asked, it shows a great want of good taste to elbow themselves into notice in this way. It does not exalt one's notions of these sort of people. If it were my case, I should be annoyed beyond measure; and I should either let them know from myself, or bid Ethelind make them understand, that I could have nothing whatever to do with them."

And horribly annoyed Philip was; but it was as much with Barbara's

thoughtless, wilful words as the knowledge that the Athertons were really beneath his roof. Vexed enough he had been at the necessity for either asking or excluding them. He had sincerely trusted they would have kept from him and his, to make it a matter of little moment to any body but Ethel and himself if they ever met again. But this near neighbourhood had entirely frustrated all his plans. The whole country side was ringing with the praises and commendations of Ralph; and here, in his own parish, it was a very difficult matter to carry his point without creating observation. And Barbara certainly did not help him to a peaceful solution of his complicated and disagreeable part.

Philip turned away from his sister, and, with his eye more narrowly bent on the dancers, at last discovered Grace, sitting beside a lady he felt sure, from the outline of her profile in church, which had come between him and the east window, must be Mrs. Ralph Atherton. He went up and held out his hand to Grace, but it was not that hearty shake he had given her when they had first met on the Promenade at Cheltenham. Still, if it was somewhat stiff and formal, it was courteous, and left Grace nothing to complain of.

"Mrs. Atherton, I presume?" he said, bowing also to that lady, before Grace could introduce Katie to Ethel's husband. "I did not know you were here until a minute ago, Miss Atherton," he said. "Have you seen Lady Leigh? Is she aware you are here?"

The colour flew up into Grace's face, and her dark gray eyes flashed scornfully. "It was a point of much discussion amongst us whether to accept Ethel's invitation or not, Sir Philip. It was, in fact, my doing, to come, as it would be the only opportunity I may ever have of seeing Ethel in her own home, and among her new friends."

"Lady Leigh would not ask those whom she did not wish to see," Philip said coldly, a little taken aback by Grace's scornful manner and not very civil speech.

"As far as Ethelind was concerned," Grace replied, "it did not cause us a doubt; but wives are not always considered to be free agents, I believe."

Philip bit his lip. "Your sister has not many restrictions, and the few laid on her are more perhaps for her own ultimate benefit than her friends can understand. But where is your brother?" he added, looking round the room, to change the dangerous turn the conversation seemed taking.

"Ralph is not here; Mrs. Atherton and I came alone."

"He does not approve of such things, perhaps; though working hard, as I hear he does, a little relaxation would do him no harm; and this is not like a public ball, to which, I believe, some clergymen object."

"Ralph is likely before long to get more relaxation than he cares for," Grace said indifferently. "He leaves Leigh-Delamere as soon as Mr. Clifford can replace him, and it may be some time before any thing else in the shape of a curacy is found."

Philip started. "Indeed!" he said; "I had not heard of it. This is a sudden thought surely. But so popular a man as your brother is hardly likely to rest long on his oars. I hear of him every where."

"Ralph will try and do his duty, go where he will; but popularity, will it always insure a good curacy?"

"Is it not a pity, then, that Mr. Atherton should throw up a certainty? It may be some time yet before Clifford is fit to resume his duties. Indeed, there is some rumour that he thinks of resigning the living altogether, though I know nothing of it officially."

"We have not heard so," Katie ventured to say. "And even if it were true, it would make little difference, I fear. My husband's resignation is already on its road to Italy."

"It is not for me to know the motives which may have influenced Mr. Atherton," Philip replied, turning to Katie as he spoke; "but is it not a pity he undertook the curacy, if he must give it up so soon? People, especially the poor, are not fond of change; and your husband, Mrs. Atherton, from what I hear, seems to be a great favourite with his parishioners."

"Circumstances have unexpectedly arisen which make it needful," Katie replied, rather sadly. "We had hoped, when Ralph took it, it had been certain until Mr. Clifford's return."

A perverse desire urged Philip to ask what those circumstances were which rendered this sudden change imperative. And Grace, whose high temper, when roused, nerved her to saying any thing, was as desirous to have said out boldly, "Then, why do you drive us away?" when at that moment Lord Redcar came up to Philip, and begged him to introduce him to Miss Atherton, who would, he hoped, join him in the quadrille just forming on the other side of the room. As Grace was led away by her partner, Katie turned round to speak to some lady, who was taking Grace's vacant seat, and Philip dropped back among the crowd, speculating in his own mind whether the beauty which had so bewitched him at Repworth would be strong enough in Grace's less striking, but still remarkable, face to lead captive the gay Lord Redcar, as it had so effectually done himself.

Most of the guests staying at Redenham left early the next morning. No one remained but Lady Gwynne and her daughters; and these, with Barbara, Philip had promised to drive to Burnley Wood, to luncheon, and see some old friends of the Gwynnes. Ethel looked so tired and worn out with her exertions and late hours the night before, that Philip specially insisted she should remain quietly on the sofa in her own room. Ethel threw herself down on the sofa, and had dropped off into a half-waking day-dream, when Valerie opened the door, and announced "Mrs. Atherton!" She started up, expecting, naturally enough, to see Katie; what was her surprise and delight when her mother, with outstretched arms, rushed towards her, and covered her face with kisses!

CHAPTER XVIII.

"It is too bad of us to keep you up so late, Ralph," Katie said, "but Gracie was so much in request, I could not get away earlier."

Grace threw herself into the great leathern chair. "I do believe," she said, "we are punished far more in having our own way than in giving it up. I had pictured Ethie, living like a queen of the fairies, amongst every thing the heart could desire; and now—"

"You have come down from your high-flown dreams," Ralph said, "and find out that hers is no more than the ordinary lot of mortals."

"Oh, it is bright and fair enough outside; as like fairy-land as any thing you can imagine; and Ethie herself is absolutely superb. But a strange feeling came over me to-night, as I talked to Sir Philip, and watched (for I never once spoke to) his sister. Ethel is not happy. Hitherto I have hoped against hope. Indeed, apart from ourselves, I never doubted her happiness for a moment: but to-night it seemed clear enough; and you are quite right, Ralph,—we must go!"

Ralph's brow clouded. "Yes," he said, "if the necessity for going had never crossed me before, it has done so unmistakably to-night. Do you know, I have had visitors in the house since you left."

"Visitors!" they both exclaimed. "Who? where are they? Not Margaret, surely?" and the blood rushed into Grace's cheeks.

"No, not Margaret; I wish it had been; she might have helped us solve some rather difficult questions. It is your mother, Grace, and Susannah."

"And what could have brought them in such a hurry, without even a line to tell us they were coming?"

"Margaret, it seems, had never told Mrs. Atherton that Ethel was at Redenham. Last week she had intelligence of the illness of Uncle John, and she left at once for Wylminster. In looking over the newspapers the next day, your mother saw an account of the reception given to Sir Philip and Lady Leigh on their arrival at Redenham; and without waiting for Margaret's return, she and Susannah started for this place. How they managed it all I don't know; but at all events here they are; and a fine load of trouble is thrown on my shoulders; for she is determined to see Ethel; nor do I know that I have any right to interfere: no one can deny a mother's natural anxiety for an interview with her own child."

"It would never have happened if Margaret had been at Deighton," Grace said.

"Certainly not; and that my mother knew. At any other time I could have laughed at the clever way in which she has outwitted us; but just now, with things so crooked and unhappy, I freely acknowledge I was very sorry to see her. However, there is no help for it; here she is; and see Ethie she declares she will."

"We must send to Ethel and tell her she is here. Perhaps she will drive over to us," Katie suggested.

Ralph shook his head.

"You don't know Mrs. Atherton, Katie, as I do. She is bent on seeing Ethelind in her own home. She is sure we are prejudiced against Philip. She even made certain of her 'fly,' by ordering the man who brought her from the station to be here by ten o'clock, to take her to Redenham."

"Philip will be so angry," Grace said nervously. "Ralph, what can we do?"

"I really don't know, Grace. I have sat here pondering it all over, ever since Mrs. Atherton went off to bed; and the only solution I have arrived at is, to let her go her own way. I have no right to stop her. Perhaps Ethel may be glad to see her. Philip may not object. At all events, I am clear of any connivance, however it will look against me. But come, you shall go to bed; and talking over this unhappy affair won't help us." And Ralph lit their candles, and hurried them to bed.

"And this is your own room, Ethie?" Mrs. Atherton said, looking round the luxuriously furnished boudoirs, when she had in some measure recovered her composure, and wiped away her tears of joy. "What a lovely place it is, child; and every thing as magnificent as a palace! The Queen herself could not desire a better home. And such a retinue of servants. Do you know, I felt quite bewildered when one after another ushered me up-stairs. Grace told me this morning you were grown, and so I think you are; but now that bright colour is gone out of your cheeks; you are looking pale and thin; and your hand trembles, and your colour comes and goes. You are not looking so well as I expected to see you."

Ethelind laughed.

"I am quite well, dear mamma, I assure you,—only a little tired with my late hours last night." And she might have added, a little nervous and frightened lest Philip and Barbara should return, and find who was her guest.

Mrs. Atherton had a hundred questions to ask; and Ethel sent for Susannah, and she learnt all she could of Margaret and Deignton, and the last news from Frank; and all that had happened to her mother since they had parted from each other.

The time slipped rapidly away. Mrs. Atherton had set her mind on seeing the house. She could better appreciate the step her child had gained in society, if she could picture to herself the way in which she lived. It was a dreadful disappointment to her finding they left for town early the next morning. "Surely, for her sake, Philip would postpone the journey just one day, when he heard that she had travelled down into Yorkshire on purpose to see him." Ethelind could only shake her head. "Her mother did not know what pressing affairs required Philip in town. Besides, he never altered his plans for any one."

"Well, I am sure he was not so inexorable at Cheltenham," Mrs. Atherton replied. "I told Grace and Ralph to-day no one could have been kinder or more considerate than he was then. Indeed, my dear, if he had not been, I never should have trusted you to him."

Ethel's brow flushed painfully.

"But Philip is most kind and careful of me, mamma," she said nervously; "and I am sure you will say so when I show you all the beautiful things he has given me." And she offered to take her mother round the long suite of rooms; led her through the long galleries and conservatories, gathered her a splendid nosegay of the choicest flowers, and ordered luncheon to be brought into her own boudoir. Mrs. Atherton hoped that Ethel would have insisted on her dining with them; but as Lady Leigh never proposed it, she did not herself know how to do so. She did not know that her child's great anxiety was to get her mother away, before Philip and his party returned home; but this was not an easy task to accomplish, when Mrs. Atherton was bent on making her visit as long a one as she could, in the hope of seeing Philip before she left, and judging for herself if the hints Grace and Ralph had given her could be founded on any thing but prejudice.

"You know Ralph is going to leave Leigh-Delamere?" Mrs. Atherton said, as she lingered over her luncheon.

"Philip told me so last night," Ethel replied, in a constrained tone, fearing what the subject might lead to.

"Yes; I was dreadfully annoyed with him when he told me so. Such a nice place as it is, and the people liking him so much, and so near to you; I can't make it out. But Ralph was always crotchety and unsettled. Nobody else would have thrown up a fellowship and married as he did."

"But Katie and he were engaged for a long time, and they seem so happy; and you know, mamma, we always said she was made for Ralph."

"If the poor dear Dean had been alive, it would have been another matter; but now, circumstanced as we are, Ralph ought to have looked higher, and married somebody who could have pushed him on in his profession."

"Ralph is sure to do well; and though Kate's family cannot help him, she herself will give him her sympathy, and make a far better wife, perhaps, than a fine lady, who knows nothing of what a clergyman most needs."

"The mischief is done now, and can't be helped," Mrs. Atherton said, with a sigh; "but I do hope Grace will manage better. I shall quite look to you, Ethie, to get Grace well settled. You must ask her to see you in town. She has felt your loss very much, and it will reconcile her to it better if you can contrive to give her a little gaiety. Besides, if Ralph does throw up his curacy, she will be a tie to him. And having made such a capital match yourself, I shall depend on you to get Grace as well married as yourself."

"You may be sure, dear mamma, I shall always do the best I can for Gracie; and directly it is possible, she shall come and see us; but you must not forget," she said, in a constrained tone, "that neither Philip nor I can do quite as we like yet. Mrs. Leigh still exercises great control over us; and Philip, I am sure, will never do any thing to displease her or his sisters."

"Displease them! What could they be displeased at in your having your own sister with you on a visit? And so pretty and elegant a girl as Grace is too, though perhaps I ought not to say so of my own child."

"You forget, dear mamma, that neither beauty or goodness, nor virtue or accomplishments, have any thing to do with it. They think Philip went out of his way, I believe, in marrying me. The Leighs are very proud; for many generations they have never married out of their own set. I don't understand it all; but—but," she said nervously, and the colour flitted painfully over her face and neck, "they have accepted me into their family for Philip's sake. I do not think that at present I could venture to invite Grace."

"Accepted you indeed! Yes, I should think so; and proud enough they ought to be of you! Where, indeed, would Philip have found a wife to compare with you in beauty? And as to family, no one could say your family was not a good one. Your father was a Dean, and I was the daughter of a Colonel in the army. You had no fortune, I allow; but Philip told me himself he did not need it. What more could they want? And that puts me in mind," she added, almost in the same breath, and before Ethelind had time to reply, "you have never shown me your jewels, and your pretty Parisian dresses."

Glad to turn her mother's curiosity into any harmless channel, Ethel sent Valerie for her jewel-case, and showed her her prettiest dresses, and kept her eyes turned on the little pendule on the mantel-shelf, and listened nervously if she heard a footfall on the carpeted floors, dreading every time the door opened that Barbara should suddenly make her appearance among them. At last the visit drew to an end; the fly was ordered round, and Mrs. Atherton drew Ethel down, and whispered something in her child's ear. Ethelind coloured scarlet, and then as suddenly became quite pale. Her mother smiled proudly. "I am so glad to hear it, darling," she said; "an heir to Redenham will be quite sure to put you in your proper place. Now take care of yourself, and don't attempt too much. I shall be very anxious about you; I wish I could see Philip, to caution him. Young people are so thoughtless and inconsiderate." And Mrs. Atherton threw her arms round Ethel's neck, and, for the first time, they both experienced in their mutual anxiety the full knowledge of the deep gulf which now separated them from each other.

Lady Leigh breathed a sigh of intense relief as she watched the hired fly, with Susannah's smiling face at the window, turn out of the

courtyard ; then sat down to try and collect her scattered senses before Philip and his sister made their appearance.

"Stephens tells me you have had visitors, Ethel," Philip said, when he came up into her room. "Did Grace tell you, last night, that your mother was at the Rectory?"

"Mamma had not arrived when Grace left," Ethel replied quietly. "Her visit was as unexpected to them as it was to me."

"I suppose she came to urge your brother to change his mind, and not throw up his curacy?"

"My mother would not influence Ralph in any way. She is vexed about it, I can see; but I do not think she has attempted to alter his intentions."

"Then her visit was to you, I conclude?"

"I think so," Ethel replied gravely, and with a half-stifled sigh.

Philip stood looking out of the window, whistling a low air. He turned round suddenly: "You told her, of course, that we left Redenham early to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, I did."

"That was right. I was afraid she might expect an invitation here; but whatever one might do in that way another day, I could not possibly have her here now."

"Whatever mamma's wishes were when she left Deignton, she was made fully aware of my inability to ask her here before she reached Redenham. Indeed, I think on the whole, she was perhaps less disappointed at our short and unsatisfactory interview, than I was at being unable to claim her as our guest."

Philip reddened. "Of course, your mother is woman of the world enough to know, when a girl marries into another set, she does not take her whole family with her. It is only some absurd notion you have picked up from your brother or sister. You yourself will grow wiser before another twelve months are over your head."

"I am wiser, Philip; far wiser, within the last fortnight, than I ever thought I should be; and I can truly say, that in my case 'ignorance was bliss,' compared with my present state of feeling;" and Ethelind buried her face in her handkerchief, and gave way to the tears she had been striving so long to keep back. Philip paced restlessly up and down the room. Ethelind's tears always unmanned him; he could bear reproaches infinitely better. He sat down, and putting his arm round her, drew her head down on his shoulder.

"It seems very hard," he said, "that a man's peace and comfort is to be thus broken in upon by people who have no business to interfere with us. What right had your brother to come here, annoying and worrying us in this way? You never wanted your mother and sisters when we were abroad. Why on earth you should be fretting after them now, I can't understand. If they would but leave you alone, you would do well enough. It will end in making you ill, I am certain; and I am

determined, if they come here any more, I will give strict orders to have you denied to them, and so put an end to the thing at once."

Ethel listened to all Philip said in mute horror; she dared not trust herself to reply; she could only comfort herself with the remembrance they would leave Redenham too early to run the chance of another call from the Rectory.

"There," he said, kissing her forehead, "now don't cry any more; you are quite unfit to come down-stairs; I will excuse you to Lady Gwynne, and tell Valerie to take care you are not disturbed." And, lifting her on to the sofa as he would have done a little child, he left her to her own reflections while he went down to dinner.

"Those Athertons are enough to drive a man wild," he said to Barbara, as they stood together, in the evening. "To be hunted out of one's house in this way is unbearable! If Clifford resigned his living to-morrow, that fellow should not have it, I am determined. And how on earth one is to get rid of him, I can't think. Of course, if he has a purpose to serve, he will stick there as long as he can, and Ethel will be ill if it lasts much longer."

"You must make a virtue of necessity, I suppose," Barbara said carelessly, "and find him a better berth elsewhere; I expect that is what he is scheming for."

"I would have done so willingly, if they had asked me; but to thrust himself and all his tribe on me in this way has cancelled all his claims to consideration. I strongly suspect it is the work of that eldest sister of Ethel's. She must be a strange person, to be doing all she does at Deighton; and she has great influence over the family."

"You leave this to-morrow," Barbara replied; "in London, you will cut them altogether."

London Poems.

V. BELGRAVIA.

THE lady sips
 With butterfly lips
 The sweets of the last new novel;
 Close to her feet,
 As she rides through the street,
 The sinning and hungry grovel.
 Tell me, does madam
 Descend from Adam?
 Or that bold baron of German mud,
 Who, ferrying over
 In a tub to Dover,
 Painted escutcheons with Saxon blood?

The lady's face
 Has a nameless grace,
 And her stainless soul is proud;
 But yonder sinner,
 Who sews for a dinner,
 Is sewing my lady's shroud!
 Tell me, then,
 Are women and men
 Equal by virtue of mother-earth;
 Or, when the breath
 Has blackened in death,
 Will the worms pay honour to noble birth?

Again, I ask,
 Is it beauty's task
 To loll past sin in a carriage;
 Or is the woman
 Made lowly-human
 In the Bethlehem men call Marriage?
 There are humble needs
 That determine creeds,
 And the mother is bound by blessed bands:
 She is evermore,
 When she strives to soar,
 Dragged down to duty by infant hands.

The lady there
Is stately and fair,
And her stars seem bright above her ;
Yet a heart, I know,
In her breast of snow,
Beats for a high-born lover.
And to high and low
Comes the mother's woe,
When she kneels by a grave, bereaven—
The churchyard tryst
With the bleeding Christ,
And a beckoning babe in heaven !

Is it a scorn
To be nobly born ?
Nay, I hold it is good, my brother ;
For the stately bride
Shall humble her pride
To the bloody tears of the mother.
The lady and lord,
In a sweet accord,
With the equal music of married minds,
Shall bend above
The baby they love,
For joy that levels but never blinds.

But yonder woman,
So grossly human,
Walks in the lamp-lit rain,
With a babe at rest
On her ragged breast,
And a drunkard's dream in her brain.
Will the babe, if it dies,
Startled back to the skies,
Startled back by the drunken frown,
Make the bitterness
And the sin weigh less
Than the love that wooed it down ?

In raiments white,
By day and by night,
Fresh from the quiet sky,
An angel of pity
Glides through the City,
And lifteth the low to the high ;

With pleading face,
Where the human trace
 Loveliness holy and undefiled,
He enters the door
Of the rich and poor,—
 And this Christ is a little child.

And the God above us,
Whose angels love us,
 Has blinded this angel's eyes,
That they look not sinward,
But brighten inward,
 To a soul that is sweetly wise ;
That the tender angel,
And sweet evangel,
 May grope his way to the human door,
And, seeing not sin,
Enter softly in,
 To smile alike upon rich and poor.

So that sinners even,
And lives bereaven
 Of Hope in the shadows of sadness,
Chasten and soften
To tears, and often
 Welcome the guest in gladness ;
So the angel doles
His pity to souls
 That sorrow has striven to smother,
And there cometh rest
To the sinner's breast,
 Newly white with the milk of the mother.

A blessed vision
Of things Elysian,
 Of the hope we all inherit,
Swims for a space
From the angel's face
 To the mother's tranced spirit ;
The frenzied pain
Of the blood and brain,
 Sweet tears of the angel leaven :
Radiant and dumb
Little children come,
 And of such is the kingdom of Heaven.

And from our sorrow
The children borrow
 The light of a common lot ;
They come unto us,
And heavenward woo us,
 And the Father forbids them not.
In weal or woe,
It is sweet to know
 That the little children have power to bind
Gently together,
In every weather,
 The highest and lowest of humankind.

Thus the lady who sips
With butterfly lips
 The sweets of the last new novel,
Close to whose feet,
As she rides through the street,
 The sinning and hungry grovel,
Will be purified
With the tears of the bride,
 And lowly and weak will unconsciously be,
As the woman who lags
Behind her in rags,
 And smiles on the baby that crows on the knee.

The blessed meaning
Of this intervening
 Is heard in the voice of labour ;
In the wealthy man's
Proud heart, as he plans
 The work of his humbler neighbour :
For the wrong-redressers,
And intercessors,
 The little children who conquer sin,
The labour implore
Of both rich and poor
 For the generation they herald in.

And the lady sweet,
Whose pulses beat
 For love of a proud patrician,
And the woman who lags
Behind her in rags,
 Are working the self-same mission.

No empty or vital
Descent or title,
No plea of blood and no right of station,
No creed can ever
Have power to sever
Eve from her use and her tribulation.

So through the City
That angel of pity
Walks, teaching by night and day
A lesson that blends
To beautiful ends
The high and the low alway :
He sees not darkness,
Or want or starkness,
He is blind, and he looks not sinward ;
For his blind eyes roll
Round back to his soul,
And burn, like the ruby, inward.

And while we climb
The mountain of time,
Smiling and beckoning stand,
Far above us,
The angels that love us,—
A beautiful infant-band ;
And ever-increasing
With love unceasing,
Bathe unaware in the bright and fond
Heaven we plain for,
And toil and strain for,
Which floats in dreams from the vale beyond.

It is no scorn
To be nobly born,
To be lofty and grand as madam :
We are fathers and mothers,
Sisters and brothers,
And the head of the house is Adam.
Like the woman in rags
That behind her lags,
The lady who waits for a lordly lover
Sees the undefiled
Face of a child
Shine, like a star in a cloud, above her.

Clouds.

IN one of those remarkable books* for which we are indebted to the peculiar genius of Mr. Ruskin, there is an observation to the effect, that it is a strange thing how little people in general know about the sky. The author goes on to say, that every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly, black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and every thing well watered; and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. Instead of this, however, there is scarcely a moment when nature is not producing in this same sky scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory; and laying all these before men indiscriminately. And yet we will not attend to such phenomena; we rarely make them a subject of observation, hardly ever of thought. Who watches and records the forms and precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that occasionally gird the sun at noon? How few notice the dance of the dead clouds when they are left by the last rays of sunlight! And yet it is in clouds that the highest characters of the beautiful, and even of the sublime, are to be traced; for it is the clouds that give life and variety to the sky.

The sky itself, even when cloudless, is, beyond a doubt, one of the most striking objects in nature, and one the most fitted to excite the deepest emotions.

"The chasm of sky above my head
Is Heaven's profoundest azure:—an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide,
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day."—*Wordsworth's Excursion.*

But it is when this mighty chasm, the blue vault above us, is partly studded with clouds, that we can best appreciate its beauty; for these objects have a strange relation to the ether, and are yet quite independent of it. Belonging to our earth, they form a link connecting us with infinite space. They are poised between us and heaven, derived from the earth, but melting into the sky; and they abound in suggestive phenomena well worthy of attention.

To commence with a mechanical definition, we may describe clouds generally as visible vapour, suspended in the air at some distance above the earth. With the essentially shifting, formless, shadowy character of vapour, becoming visible or remaining invisible according to minute changes of temperature in different parts of the vast aerial ocean that floats above the earth, they combine distinct outlines, peculiar and striking colours, and other characteristics, which enable us to speak of them as

definite objects. They carry water from the ocean to the mountain-tops, they signal by their dread artillery the occasions on which the electric forces balance themselves, they cause important modifications of light and heat on the earth, they are intimately connected with the production of dew and frost, they add immeasurably to the picturesque effects which the landscape-painter and the admirer of nature love to study, and they offer to the poet innumerable suggestions and similitudes. Such are a few of the benefits we derive from the clouds.

It is a property of the mixed gases which form our atmosphere, that between the intervals or interstices of the atoms of which it is made up, a certain percentage of vapour of water, varying according to temperature, is permanently present. This vapour, obtained for the most part from the sea, is rapidly diffused as needed, and, being constantly evaporated, involves a corresponding disturbance of electric equilibrium. As the air is never at rest, and above a certain limit of height moves with considerable regularity and steadiness, the vapour, still in an invisible form, becomes universally distributed, and whenever in any part of the atmosphere and from any cause a change of temperature is occasioned, a corresponding change takes place in its vapour-holding capacity. If the temperature is diminished, the result is the formation of mist or visible vapour, and when such change takes place at a distance, it produces what we call a cloud.

The formation of cloud must be proceeding always at the shifting contact of cold with warm currents at all heights in our atmosphere. The same result must also take place where there are mountains or lofty elevations, for these being not so rapidly affected as the air by change of temperature, and receiving much heat from the sun during the day, which they lose at night, are almost always of a temperature different from that of the currents of air which strike upon them. When rain has recently fallen, it is often curious in mountain countries to watch the incessant and rapid formation of cloud over some small wooded patch of land, the moisture from the warm earth steaming into the chilled air and being immediately converted into mist, which gradually accumulates till it breaks away and drifts to a distance, assuming a distinct cloud nature. It is equally curious to observe a narrow side valley in a mountain district covered for hours together with mist and rolling cloud, while the larger and more open valley out of which it opens has a perfectly clear sky. The cause of this is, however, obvious—the lateral valley, enjoying less of the sun's cheering and warming rays, is colder than the more open valley adjacent. The air as it passes is sucked up the side valley, and, coming into the cooler temperature of its sides, is at once condensed into mist and rendered visible. Such mist may easily turn afterwards into cloud.

In temperate climates, whether with or without mountains, clouds are formed at all levels up to fifteen or twenty thousand feet, or even more; but those below ten thousand feet are more massive and more in-

fluenced by local causes than the others. The observations of Professor Piazzi Smyth at Teneriffe are exceedingly interesting on this head, as he was enabled, while living at the great elevation of 10,500 feet on the slopes of that isolated mountain, to recognise and record a multitude of curious facts. A cloud-bank was observed to extend widely at an elevation of 4,500 feet, at which height a N.E. wind constantly prevailed, drifting the clouds towards the S.W. At a far greater elevation (nearly 15,000 feet), a S.W. wind was constantly drifting other clouds towards the N.E.; and thus there were two systems of visible vapour in the air, the one travelling in a direction exactly opposite to the other.

The way in which water is taken up and held by the air in fogs and mists, or conveyed along in the form of a visible cloud, seems at first to involve mechanical difficulties. We will return to this subject when we have considered a little further the peculiarities of clouds and cloud motion. All we need now point out is, that the quantity of vapour existing in air in the invisible form depends on local temperature, and is probably at no time the same over any considerable area, and certainly never the same for twelve hours together in the same place. As a matter of calculation, it is found that when the temperature is 50° F., each cubic yard of dry air (about 160 gallons) can hold nearly 150 grains of water, or one third part of a fluid ounce of water; at 32° F., or the freezing-point of water, only one-half this quantity; and at 70° F., nearly double can be absorbed and retained in an invisible form. A comparatively small change of temperature will thus at any time greatly alter the capacity of air for holding vapour in an invisible form.

It is not difficult to understand whence the vapour is derived that passes into the air. The great ocean covering three-fourths of the surface of our globe, the lakes and rivers present at frequent intervals on the land, the numerous smaller pieces of water, and the large tracts of moist earth protected from dryness by vegetation and constantly receiving rain,—all these insure a rapid supply whenever an increase of temperature requires it. The transmission from one part of the atmosphere to another is as rapid and complete as if no air were present and the vapour passed at once into empty space. In large unwatered tracts of country the atmosphere presents a very different appearance from that to which we are accustomed, but, however dry, retains the water proper to its temperature.

When a change of temperature occurs, and the alteration is in the direction of increased heat, the air continues to absorb; but the moment that a diminution of heat takes place, owing to any cause, not only does the power to absorb cease, but the power to retain is lost; and visible vapour represents the difference. Such vapour has a tendency, not unfrequently, to assume the form of the object by which it is caused. Thus, where mountains are present, a cloud seems to fix itself at the summit or on the sides of the mountain, at a certain level, and there obstinately remain. No matter how violently the wind may be blowing, the cloud is immovable. Such a phenomenon is well known on the Table Mountain

at the Cape of Good Hope. A similar appearance may be frequently observed on the more detached mountain-peaks of Switzerland, of which Mount Pilate (*Mons Pileatus*, the cloud-capped mountain) is an excellent example. In these cases, it is not that the wind is unable to detach the cloud, but simply that the warm wind loaded with moisture is chilled and becomes visible, the chill commencing at some distance to windward of the object by radiation of cold, and continuing at a distance to the leeward of it, until the air ceases to be affected by the cool surface it has been in contact with for a time. If we take the trouble to climb the mountain and enter the cloud, we find it to consist of a driving mist, raw and chilly to the feelings, but of no great density. A change in the direction of the wind, bringing air not so warm, will immediately produce a clearing of the sky with a sensation of increased warmth; but any other change produces little if any alteration.

It often happens in mountain districts, if the observer is situated at a high level, that he may observe beneath his feet the building-up of a cloud, as it commences with steamy vapours from a patch of forest, and rapidly drifts away with some current of air. The same thing when seen from below is less easily understood, but it is very frequent.

When a cloud is once formed, it has a tendency to remain floating, suspended in air of about the same density as itself. In the higher regions of the atmosphere, where the clouds are chiefly formed at the meeting of two currents of different water capacity, sets of small or apparently small clouds are produced, all nearly of the same form, as all are due to precisely the same cause. Thus, we have the mare's-tail and mackerel skies, and other kinds, where numerous light fleecy clouds appear at a great elevation. In the technical language of the meteorologists, these are called *cirrus* clouds, from the peculiar curl they often present. It has been supposed that such clouds are composed of particles of snow. They occur in systems; long ranks of them extending in one direction for vast distances far above our heads, and being occasionally crossed by other systems, at other but also extreme altitudes. They present very varied and singular appearances. They are probably never less than three miles from the earth, and sometimes certainly much more. Their colour generally is the purest white, contrasting finely with the rich full blue of a clear sky. They have a tendency, derived from their mode of origin, to arrange themselves in parallel bands; and, by a well-known law of perspective, these appear to converge to points near the horizon. At the equator, the direction of the bands of such clouds was observed by Humboldt to be nearly north and south, but with us they run more frequently north-west and south-east. Amongst these singular and exquisitely beautiful clouds are formed haloes and mock suns, and indeed careful observation would seem to show that they are almost always accompanied by iridescent phenomena, though often very faint.

When these clouds are more dense, occurring at somewhat lower levels, and accumulating in larger quantity, but still retaining their banded

appearance, they pass into another kind, called *cirro-stratus*, which resemble loose masses of carded cotton, and pass often rapidly into rain. Cirrus clouds are often seen near the horizon at sunset and sunrise; but it is chiefly on a fine summer's evening when these loftiest vapours become tinted with the rich warm glow of the setting sun that they are most completely the objects of the painter's study and the poet's praise. The following passage from Wordsworth's *Excursion* is a faithful description of some of these effects, at the moment when the glorious orb of day has disappeared beneath the distant mountain-tops, but still lights up the heavens:

"Multitudes of little floating clouds,
Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
Through their ethereal texture, had become
Vivid as fire,—clouds separately poised,
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which, from the unapparent fount of glory,
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive."

The clouds called *cumulus* differ from those just described in many essential characteristics. They appear to be formed near the earth, and ascend gradually during the day. Thus, in summer, the sun will rise in a clear sky, or through hazy strata of cirrus and cirro-stratus, which immediately disappear. Towards eight o'clock in the morning, small flocky clouds are seen, which gradually increase in number and volume during the heat of the day, and then disappear towards sunset. On the mountains, one may see such clouds at one's feet in the morning; at noon they form a mist around us; in the afternoon they are far overhead; and towards night they have vanished. As the earth becomes heated, the air immediately above it is warmed, and absorbs moisture. This warm and damp but light air, rising to replace the cold and heavy air above, is soon chilled, and its moisture become visible. Towards evening, the ascending currents are replaced by descending currents, and the clouds disappear, being reabsorbed.

Such clouds are not very picturesque, nor do they add much to the beauty of sky effects; but they not unfrequently present very grotesque and varied forms, changing with the most marvellous rapidity, and melting away in a singular manner without one's being able to trace the mode of change. When of large dimensions, they cover the heavens and altogether obscure the sun, being in this state entirely without form and beauty; but whenever broken up, even the heaviest clouds are capable of presenting wonderful variety, and the most exquisite softness of pencilling.

The true rain-cloud (*nimbus* of meteorologists) is limited to a moderate distance from the earth, probably not extending to more than four or five thousand feet. Being so near the earth, it is often seen to be drifted along, torn by the wind, and presenting sweeping and jagged

forms, changing at every instant. They are not in reality blown about by the wind as they appear to be, for they form part of the wind itself, the sweeping rain and the driving wind rising and lulling together. It is also well known, that while, to any one within a rain-cloud in the act of discharging, it appears that the cloud itself is in violent and rapid motion, the same cloud will appear, to any one looking on from a distance, to be in perfect repose—not moving from the spot where, for some local reason, the shower occurs.

Many beautiful and familiar appearances are due to the rain-clouds. They pass with rapidity across, and of course below other clouds, partially concealing and modifying them—often, by their peculiar gray tint, setting off the colours and intense whiteness of the more massive-looking *cumulus*, and the delicate fringes and curls of *cirrus* far overhead. Of all clouds, they are the most transparent; resembling sometimes drifted smoke or haze, and sometimes the most delicate curtain of gray air. But they are also not unfrequently opaque and heavy, distinctly announcing their object and use. “Wet, transparent, formless, full of motion, felt rather by their shadows on the hills than by their presence in the sky, becoming dark only through increased depth of space, most translucent when most sombre, and light only through increased buoyancy of motion, letting the blue through their interstices, and the sun-light through their chasms.” These clouds are admirable studies for the artist, as well as strikingly adapted to excite the imagination of the true lover of nature.

In their ordinary occurrence, accumulating gradually till they cover the whole vault above us, they may seem unmeaning; but when we are enabled to study at once the course of a storm, we may better appreciate their value as elements of the picturesque. In the whole literature of art there is, perhaps, no more admirable and eloquent description of artistic nature—the picturesque in the highest and best sense of the word—than is given by Mr. Ruskin, in the work already quoted, when speaking of nature's skies, contrasting the representation of them in pictures by some of the old masters and by modern landscape-painters. We will venture to make use of the passage in concluding our notice of rain-clouds. After describing the quiet masses of white cloud, gradually accumulating as the day advances, Mr. Ruskin tells us to “wait a little till we see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses, piled every instant higher and higher into the sky, and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks. Out of the pale blue of the horizon, we may then see, forming and advancing, a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapours, which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their gray network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and the motion of the leaves together. Soon we may recognise horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid wreaths creating themselves, we know not how, along the shoulders of the hills. And then comes the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and

those watch-towers of vapour are swept away from their foundations, and the waving curtains of opaque rain are let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black bending fringes, or pacing in pale columns along the surface. As the sun sinks, the storm drifts for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking and loaded with snow-white, torn, steam-like rags of capricious vapour,—now gone, now gathered again; and the sun, like a red-hot ball, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, dyeing all the air about it with blood.”*

The motions of clouds are curious, and involve an apparent difficulty, only to be explained and understood by considering their actual nature and origin. Masses of cloud are often seen to advance in direct opposition to the winds that blow near the earth, and these masses steadily make their way across the visible hemisphere either in bands or, more frequently, in lens-shaped groups; not unfrequently the advancing end is more rounded or quite bluff. Such clouds put on strange and fanciful forms, changing rapidly, and imitative of any object the imagination suggests. At the same time, perhaps, a bank of white mist serves as a permanent background, curls of white fleecy vapour are in the zenith quite undisturbed, and shadows fall unexpectedly and inexplicably upon the landscape. Such a complication generally accompanies or announces rainy and windy weather, and is due to the existence of very distinct opposing currents of air at various altitudes, each striving for the mastery. A distant *cirro-stratus*, or fog-bank of the upper sky (the *stratus* is the name given to formal stratified clouds limited to no particular height), thus remains altogether unchanged in form or proportions for a long time, while a nearer cloud of similar form partly conceals and is entirely shadowed by it. At the great elevation of the upper cloud, at least three miles above the earth, the air is no doubt in steady motion; but whether the bank of cloud moves, or is still, its motion is not recognised at the distance of the observer. At half that elevation the same amount of motion of air and cloud is far more easily noticed, and even without any other difference, the lower clouds will then appear to pass along in front of the upper. As they pass along, the upper and lower edges of the larger clouds are constantly overlapping and interfered with by the currents of air above and below, and the cloud assumes a blunted truncated form, its bluff extremity pushing forwards into space.

While in many cases the cloud actually formed is driven onwards with the wind to its destined goal, in others, as we have already intimated, the whole cloud-phenomenon consists in a continuous reduction to the visible form of the vapour present in the air, either when the air strikes against the surface of a mountain, or meets with a different current and becomes chilled. In such cases the cloud is permanent, and varies little in shape or dimensions, while the wind may vary exceedingly in force, and may

* Modern Painters, vol. i. pp. 259, 260.

even change its direction without the cloud being altered. It is a well-known intimation of storm when huge rain-clouds, black with moisture ready to be deposited, roll on with increasing vehemence in a direction opposed to that of the wind, becoming heaped and piled, till the storm bursts, electrical explosions marking the recovery of disturbed equilibrium, and the rain falling in torrents. Such storms it is generally said "*clear the air*," and render it more healthy for animal life. They certainly produce a marked effect on its electrical state.

The colours and shadows of clouds are not less varied and beautiful than their forms. When the sun is near the horizon, and its light shines through a considerable thickness of vapour, the colours transmitted always include red, an excess of yellow and blue rays being absorbed. Close to the western horizon, however, when the sun is about to set, and the clouds are not too thickly congregated, we find also every conceivable variety of yellow, passing from the palest and purest tint to the deepest and richest admixtures of yellow with red. Blue is a colour rarely found in clouds, never by itself as a pure colour, and rarely in mixture either with yellow as any shade of green, or with red as in shades of violet and purple. The latter is, indeed, the most frequent of such admixtures; but it is generally to be accounted for without our actually being obliged to admit it as a positive tint belonging to the cloud itself.

We have reserved till now the details of a very interesting question, namely, in what precise condition are the particles of water that form cloud, and how do they assume those marvellous shapes, sometimes so definite, sometimes so indefinite, of which we have been speaking? We have already referred to one of the early volumes of *Modern Painters*, in reference to other departments of the subject, and we find in the last volume very recently published, that this difficulty, among other interesting cloud questions, is forcibly stated. "Why," asks the author, "is the mist which lies in the morning so softly in the valley,—why is it so heavy? and why are the colossal pyramids, huge and firm with outlines as of rocks, and strength to bear the beating of the sun on their fiery flanks,—why are these so light, and instead of vanishing, as does the mist under the sun's increasing influence, bear up against his attacks, and disappear only under the milder radiance of the moon and stars?"

That a mystery is involved in this, as in so many of nature's operations, may readily be admitted; but perhaps the clue to it may be found in what has already been stated in connection with the original formation of a cloud.

It seems at first strange, that as water is heavier than air, clouds should not only form but remain floating, and in many cases lose that power of wetting which belongs to ordinary mists near the earth's surface. Certainly clouds neither float as boats on the air, nor are retained only for a short time, like feathers, by friction and resistance, nor do the particles of water in a cloud consist of hollow spheres with void cavities, or having their interior filled with light gas. No explanation of this kind

is sufficient or satisfactory; nor is the water-cloud like the cloud of incense, that rises and for a time floats in air while disseminating its fragrance.

To comprehend what we may of the mystery, we must understand clearly the nature of the vapour atmosphere. It is in its very nature an independent atmosphere. The shell of air that encloses our earth consists of several parts which have strict relations, and a certain dependence on each other, but at the same time are essentially separate, having undergone no chemical combination. Gases are in some important respects very unlike liquids, and this is nowhere more clearly shown than in the mode in which they mix with each other. Thus if some of that light street gas, which is the substance used to render our balloons buoyant, were placed in a vessel inverted over another vessel in which was a quantity of heavy choke-damp (a gas often found at the bottom of old wells and pits, and so heavy that it may be lifted, and poured from one tumbler into another like water), then even if each vessel were carefully covered with bladder before the experiment commenced, the two gases would be found after a short time to have mingled completely, the lighter having descended through the two bladders to mix with the heavier, and the heavier having mounted to mix with the lighter. The vapour of water in the atmosphere is for all practical purposes a gas, and mixes as a gas with the other gases that make up the whole. It is, therefore, held up in the air just as the slightly heavier oxygen and much heavier carbonic acid are held up with and by the nitrogen. No doubt there remains much that we cannot fully understand in this mode of existence of mixed airs, and we cannot certainly be said to know why the heavier atoms remain permanently in contact with the lighter atoms of oxygen and nitrogen; but we may accept it for the present as a fact, hoping in time to recognise the cause and the mode of action of the law. At any rate, there is no need to assume that the water is present in an unusual state, or that it is in any other than its most ordinary condition. As sugar or salt mixed with water becomes, as it were, fluid by being mingled with fluids, so the vapour of water behaves as a gas when mingled with air in our atmosphere.*

* The very recent researches of Dr. Tyndall on the subject of heat radiating through atmospheres containing more or less vapour, and the fact that when the sun's rays of light and heat pass through perfectly dry atmospheric air no heat is lost, while through certain gases and steam no heat passes, seem likely to lead to important results in meteorology. Thus in proportion as the air is damp, in that same proportion does it absorb more heat from the sun's rays, and, at the same time, becomes capable of holding more vapour. In the same way also does the earth part with the heat it already possesses, the more slowly in proportion as its steam atmosphere is more dense, while on the other hand it is under such circumstances less heated by the sun. The change necessarily taking place every hour as different parts of the earth and atmosphere are exposed to the sun's action thus insures that incessant change so strongly indicated by the clouds. It will be borne in mind, that each change of vapour-condition is also accompanied by a disturbance of the electric equilibrium.

The nature and continual presence of an invisible atmosphere of water is thus well accounted for, and it is only when we come to the resumption of the visible form without a necessary conversion into drops of water falling through the air, that there is an absence of clear explanation. When, however, it is remembered that the property we call weight belongs to all matter, and that, for any thing we know, the ultimate atoms of all are of the same weight, the differences being due to density or closeness of packing of the atoms, it will be seen that there is no necessary reason why visible as well as invisible vapour should not be retained permanently in the air. The vapour may be set free without assuming the fluid form. However this may be, it has never yet been proved that clouds are not limited to air in motion; for, as we have seen, a cloud may appear in perfect repose, even when violent and shifting winds are all around, the cloud being a permanent result of the actual motion of the air.

The conversion into a mist or raining cloud of what may be called a dry cloud, or visible vapour not adhering readily to solid objects which have about the same temperature, seems to be in all cases accompanied with electrical action. In meteorological observatories, where the electrical state of the air is recorded by instruments, this is sometimes seen in a very striking manner. A sudden shower occurring without previous warning will in an instant set all the electric instruments in full motion,—gold leaves and pith-ball vibrating to and fro, and sparks snapping, now faintly, now loudly, so long as the shower lasts. Occasionally, and without cloud, moisture is also rapidly deposited from air which to the senses is quite dry, but in this case illustrated by *deu* the air is exposed to a considerable reduction of temperature; and there is no conversion of the vapour from the invisible to the visible form. At all times the production of drops of rain is an electrical phenomenon, and the immediate result of electrical disturbance; whereas there is no proof, and not much probability, that the mere change from invisible to visible vapour involves any interference with the ordinary state of electric equilibrium.

Much unnecessary astonishment has, we think, been excited by the form, the permanent floating, and the laws of motion of clouds, as well as by the glorious colours they reflect or transmit. In common with all natural phenomena, they not only present for study groups of facts for comparison, but suggest reasons and causes assigned for them. We believe that in this case the reasons are good and sufficient, though requiring, for their full exemplification, a much longer space and a more technical treatment than can here be given them.

Our space will not admit, nor does the occasion require, that we should here remark on the delineation of clouds, and the vast step in advance that has been made in the art of representing them honestly and well within the period of modern landscape-painting. This subject is one that has been exhausted already; and it is enough that we offer our tribute of admiration in this respect to the author of *Modern Painters*, and

most especially to the first volume of that work. We now see in the works of landscape-painters an attempt to render nature in this glorious subject, and it is satisfactory to find that the attempt is often successful.

To the poet, cloud-land has always offered irresistible attractions; but, from the facility of stringing commonplaces on a subject of such infinite variety, there is an amount of unmeaning and unsatisfactory cloud-poetry extant, which it would be painful to contemplate. We would rather direct attention to the good than the bad, and turn therefore at once to a poem which is as exhaustive in its way as the finest of Turner's skies illustrated by the pen of Mr. Ruskin. Both are poems, and both are pictures. As we believe there is nothing in ancient or modern literature that more nobly and accurately pictures what it professes to describe than the poem by Shelley entitled *A Cloud*, we make no apology for concluding our account of this subject by a few extracts from it to justify the opinion we have expressed.

"I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
 I bear light shades for the leaves, when laid
 In their noon-day dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under,
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

* * * * *

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
 And his burning plumes outspread,
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
 When the morning-star shines dead.

* * * * *

That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden,
 Whom mortals call the moon,
 Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
 By the midnight breezes strewn;
 And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
 Which only the angels hear,
 May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
 The stars peep behind her and peer;
 And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,
 When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
 Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
 Are each paved with the moon and these."

Daughters of Eve.

II.

ELIZABETH BERKELEIGH, MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH.

I MAY be charged, perhaps, in the selection of my present subject, with departing somewhat from the intentions laid down in commencing this series ; namely, of taking for description only women of the simplest and purest type of feminine excellence. The Margravine of Anspach, as some venerable reader of these papers may yet remember, had, both under her later name and as Lady Craven, a celebrity scarcely compatible with the existence of that inner worth of character and delicate appreciation of the true attributes of her sex, which I am seeking models to illustrate. Now, in the first place, let me say that, were I bent on only exhibiting the perfection of that standard of womanhood which is rather to be felt than distinctly set forth in terms, I should never have even commenced to form this gallery of portraits. I should have rejected the task as hopeless. I do not warrant my heroines without blemish ; I only warrant them without vice ; and the utmost I can say is, that I shall concern myself with their good points chiefly, only noticing their faults as the foils of these, or as affording a lesson how the best may err. In the second place, I firmly believe, and indeed it is patent to any who will compare the facts of this lady's life with the gross and mutually contradictory reports circulated about her for years in the English newspapers, that no woman ever suffered more from slanderous tongues than the Margravine of Anspach. No one is beautiful, witty, and accomplished, and apparently a favourite of fortune, with impunity, even in these days ; and when the higher orders were openly far less blameless in their lives than now, the facilities open to envy and malignity in gaining currency for the foulest calumnies directed against the "upper ten" were proportionally greater. Thank heaven, whatever be the political purity of the press in the present day, it does not now lend itself as a tool to private malice and social conspiracies, or open its poisoned mouth to be gagged by a bribe ; yet even we may remember the time when the traditions of the old newspaper world were maintained in all their hideousness in a weekly paper, killed many years since by public disgust, and leaving, to the credit of our age be it said, no successor. So long as the passions and depravity of the public created an appetite for slander, there were plenty of caterers for the foul repast, and the victim of the black-mail plunderer or prepaid bravo had no resource but an action for libel, which in such a condition of society would only aggravate the original evil, and give fresh scope for a new outpouring of venom. Not to have braved such an ordeal cannot be taken as betokening a conscience not free from self-reproach. Magnanimity and prudence with respect to others may dictate silent

endurance ; and such a course may be rendered easier by a proud contempt for those who bring, as for those who believe, the unmerited accusations, and an elastic vivacity of mind, which can make the most of the abundant consolation which all who possess real worth find against the calumnies of the world, in the faithful discharge of the duties of life, the exertion of active benevolence, and the enjoyment of troops of friends. Such was the case of the Margravine of Anspach ; the main facts of whose life I am about to trace, finding in them, as I conceive, the evidence of an originally highly graced woman's nature, further adorned by much strenuous self-cultivation, that kept clear of any encroachment on the intellectual domain of man, and merely gave a wider scope to that mother-wit which arrives frequently at more true results than the cumbrous ratiocination of the sterner sex. In the memoirs which the Margravine of Anspach wrote of herself, and which were published in 1826, she lays claim to the strictest truthfulness as an essential part of her character, and as being less a virtue in her than a strong natural bent. There is no reason whatever to call in question the accuracy of this view of herself. It has been said, however, that these memoirs are remarkable for what they keep back. It may be so ; but the assertion rests mainly on the fact that the calumnies to which she was exposed are not explicitly refuted or explained. It would have been inconsistent with her motives for reserve, when the sting of these calumnies must have been felt and resented with all the sensibility and warmth of youth,—motives which, originating in prudence and discretion, could only have been strengthened by time,—to have in her old age raked up the fancied grounds of the accusations of her enemies, and to have put herself upon trial before the uncertain tribunal of public opinion, when the scent of truth was long cold, and the branding-irons of prejudice were still as ever at red heat. She has given the simple outline of her strange and eventful life with a straightforward adherence to facts, which has never been impugned ; and these very facts are in the main incompatible with the great bulk of the scandal uttered against her, while they afford an ample justification of outward acts, which, without explanation, would seem certainly to argue against her sense of propriety and delicacy.

Elizabeth Berkeleigh was the youngest daughter of Augustus, fourth Earl of Berkeleigh, by his countess, Elizabeth, daughter of Henry Drax, of Cherborough, in the county of Dorset, esquire, and was born in December 1750. As a fit prelude to an eccentric life, she came into the world two months ere by the laws of nature she was to be looked for, and this circumstance had nearly led to the abrupt termination of the infant's earthly career, ere its sands of life had run out the boiling of an egg. A certain ceremonial was observed in those days when ladies of a certain rank swelled the rolls of the aristocracy, and the first person who approached the bedside of the noble *accouchée* was the Countess of Albe-marle, her aunt. The infant, which had so unexpectedly claimed its share of the world, had doubly disappointed its mother ; first, by being a

girl, when a boy had been predicted with assurance, for Lady Berkeley had previously had four girls in succession, three of them, singularly enough, at one birth;—next, the little being, so far from exhibiting any signs of the future beauty, presented the most miserable, half-alive aspect imaginable; and there being nothing ready to receive it, a piece of flannel was huddled round it, and it was left on an arm-chair in a sort of despair, and for some minutes altogether unheeded, till the visitor already named was on the point of sitting down in the aforesaid arm-chair, and but for the screams of the attendant would have driven out once and for ever the small instalment of life-breath the forlorn babe had been strenuously endeavouring to suck in. Lady Albemarle thereupon snatched up the child, took it to the light to examine it, and observing that it there managed to open a pair of very bright eyes, pronounced its chances of vitality to be far from desperate. A wet-nurse was therefore immediately procured; and by dint of great care the puny little being was preserved, to become eventually the lovely, accomplished, and vivacious subject of this memoir. Lady Berkeley, who is described by the Margravine as having but little maternal affection, treated her youngest daughter with even worse than indifference, and reserved all the indulgence and attention she was disposed to show to her offspring for her elder sister, Lady Georgiana, who was regarded as the beauty. The neglect and severity of the mother stamped a peculiar air of shyness and modesty on Lady Elizabeth; and as her natural character was vivacious, and disposed to gaiety and enjoyment, a contrast was thus created, which, as she herself very unreservedly confesses, greatly contributed to her fascination. So far, out of evil came good; but there can be little doubt that had the Margravine of Anspach experienced more maternal tenderness, some part of her character would have been much improved. When Lord Berkeley died, his youngest daughter was only five years old; and from a sense, no doubt, that his daughters would want more solicitous supervision than they were likely to obtain from their mother, their welfare occupied his last thoughts exclusively. He had from the same cause some time previously sent for a Swiss lady, the wife of a German tutor, and placed them in a house at one end of his park at Cranford, where they lived on a small income of their own. Charged by Lord Berkeley, in the most solemn manner, to watch over his two daughters, and never to leave them till they were married, this excellent person fulfilled her trust to the letter, and exercised, as the Margravine gratefully acknowledges, the most beneficial influence by her precepts and example on her heart and mind. The actual education of Ladies Georgiana and Elizabeth was intrusted to a governess, the Swiss lady being only concerned with their moral training and manners; for her care of which, it is singular to state, she never received the slightest material recompense.

I do not profess to know the details of a young lady's education in these days, and can only speak of it from the results exhibited in the circle of my female acquaintances. From this I should say that too

much is grasped at, and too little effectually held and retained as regards the mental qualifications; while too little pains seem taken in the formation of character and the acquirement of grace of manner and deportment, so essential to the highest influence of women. || There may have been a little too much stiffness and formality in the old-fashioned training of females, but there was also a greater simplicity, less confusion and cramming in the acquirement of knowledge and so-called accomplishments. It is more essential that a lady should be gentle in her manners, graceful in her bearing, discreet, dignified, and delicate in all her relations with the world, and unite these qualities with a thorough comprehension of household duties, than that she should have a shallow smattering of the whole encyclopædia of human knowledge without one definite idea; a pretentious but wholly delusive proficiency in every art, while the plain realities of life, which must some day be painfully grappled with, are overlooked; and the greater part, if not all, the advantages with which nature graces more or less every individual of her sex are allowed to fall into abeyance, and even turn into defects from want of cultivation. Good breeding, not only in its foppish but in its wholesome sense, is an art which, like every art, is only to be acquired by a severe discipline. To women it is an absolute essential, and the devotion of mind given to its acquirement is already a healthy exercise of the faculties, for an immediately practical end. A mind so trained, if there be a disposition for knowledge, literary, scientific, or philosophical, or a taste for art, will acquire any of these "accomplishments" the more readily and effectively, and just so much of them as can be amalgamated without detriment to the chief ends—grace, amiability, helpfulness. How young ladies of rank were educated when George the Third was king, is shown us in the following epitome of a day with her governess, when the future Margravine was thirteen years old: "The governess regulated every thing by the clock; and as soon as the young people were awake, we were accustomed to kneel down, having arisen from the bed, to say a morning prayer. The maid-servant was then introduced, and I was instructed how to make a bed, as the governess paid attention even to the smallest minutiae. I was then left to myself, to dress in the best manner I could. After the ablutions and the toilette were finished, every thing was explained to me, and advice given as to cleanliness and order. When these duties were gone through, which I did as hastily as I could, I left my apartment, leaving my sister to the admiration of her own person, and to the ideas which the reflection of her looking-glass produced in her youthful mind. In the early part of the morning, I repeated to my governess a translation of some short phrase she had given me the night before, of French into English, and another of English into French. I then partook of a breakfast, which was of milk-porridge; and if I was unwell, of water-gruel; never being permitted to take tea, coffee, or butter, as she considered them prejudicial to the health of young persons like myself. After breakfast, I was allowed to take

exercise in the garden, if the weather permitted; and if it rained, I was suffered to sweep the room and arrange the furniture, and then again pursue my studies. A walk before dinner was always allowed; and that dinner consisted only of a pudding, or broth and one kind of meat, dressed in the plainest manner. It was to this diet that I attribute the excellent health I have always enjoyed, having never experienced any disagreeable sensations of the stomach, but merely what might arise from hunger."

At the time this account of the tutorial discipline of her two daughters refers to, the Countess of Berkeleigh was in Paris with them, having obtained leave of absence from the Princess of Wales, to whom she was lady of the bedchamber. Lady Elizabeth had already shot up into a tall, lithe figure, and her countenance developed the budding signs of that lively beauty which afterwards distinguished her. At this time, however, though she observes that many opportunities offered themselves of discovering her own personal charms, she protests herself to have been entirely ignorant of them; the exclusive admiration that was bestowed by her mother on her elder sister leading her to imagine herself rather ill-favoured than otherwise. There was no such blindness to the fascinations of her person in after years; and her memoirs teem with amusing evidences of the high sense she entertained of her outward attractions. Among others is a passage in which she criticises the various portraits that have been painted of her; and though Sir Joshua Reynolds—whose portrait of her at Petworth seems charming enough—and Romney and Madame Lebrun exerted in turns and more than once their skill to transfer her graces to canvas, she declares they none of them have done justice either to her face or figure. The same candour in exposing her thorough self-appreciation as regards her mental and moral excellencies, is observable throughout the entertaining sketch of her career, and gives at first the impression that one is listening to the weakest and vainest woman that ever breathed. A little further acquaintance, however, removes this notion almost altogether. When a woman has been sought and openly admired all her life for her beauty, grace, sense, wit, and good nature, by the highest and most distinguished personages of her age, it would seem more shocking than the grossest display of vanity, to affect a mincing reserve and humility in speaking of her own merits. At Paris, Lady Elizabeth and her sister first became initiated into general society, at the weekly receptions of Lady Berkeleigh; and their perfect knowledge of French, and thorough ease and self-possession amidst the flattery and homage with which they were surrounded, both from their own countrymen and the more demonstrative gallantry of their French guests, created some astonishment among the latter. This quality, so estimable in young ladies, and which may be compared to steadiness under fire in a soldier, the Margravine confesses to owe to early training. "Instead of skipping with a rope," she writes, "I am taught to pay and receive visits with children, and to suppose myself a lady who receives company;

and my sister and myself had a set of young ladies who visited us in London." The incidents of their Paris visit were destined to impart something more than a general and superficial acquaintance with the fashionable world. The solemn trials and awe-inspiring responsibilities of life began to reveal themselves with grim foreboding to the child of fourteen, not only in her elder sister's experience, but even in her own. One night, she relates, when her mother was asleep, Lady Georgiana stole silently to her bedside, and whispered, "My Bessy, I am in love." This announcement was startling enough, though it might perhaps have been less so to a less inexperienced person; but the little confidant's astonishment was increased tenfold when she learned on whom her sister had settled her maiden affections. This was no other than Lord Forbes, who is described as very ugly, a widower, and much older than the young lady whose heart he had inflamed. "I hope you will tell your mother," observed the little sister, as soon as she could find her tongue. "Not yet; my mother means to take us to a *bal masqué* to-morrow night, and then you will know more." The *bal masqué* came, and was destined to add still more to the experiences of Lady Elizabeth, who was allowed with her sister to walk through the ball, each having a cavalier to protect them. Presently a tall man in a black domino, taking advantage of some stoppage impeding their progress, dropped on his knees before her little ladyship, and poured forth a formal declaration of love, commencing, "Lady Elizabeth, I die if you do not hear me." The utterly disconcerted damsel, after an interval of terrified silence, hastened back fluttering to her mother's side. Lord Forbes, who turned out to be the confidant of the black domino, and the black domino himself, whose name is not mentioned, proposed each a few days after for the hand of his respective flame. The first was deferred till the lady's guardians were consulted; and the other, of course, seeing the youth of the young lady, peremptorily rejected. Lord Forbes, not meeting with the approval of Lady Georgiana's guardians, carried her off on the very evening of her presentation at Court; and it is related that Lord Boston, one of the aforesaid guardians, in the midst of the melancholy scene caused by the concern of the whole family and Lady Berkeleigh's intense sorrow, exclaimed, with ludicrous egotism, "Surely I am the most unfortunate person existing! I never had but two wards, Miss Bayley and Lady Georgiana, and one man runs away with both!" This was in April 1756, when Lady Elizabeth was accordingly in her sixteenth year.

In the following November she was herself in turn presented at Court, after in vain imploring her mother on her knees, she tells us, not to do so. Thenceforward she became courted and caressed in a manner which would have turned the head of most young ladies; but her natural shyness and diffidence rendered her proof against the dangers of adulation. Lord Berkeleigh, her eldest brother, imagining her marked timidity at this time to spring from want of nerve, taught her to ride, shoot, and row, to the horror of her governess; and from these experiences, she informs us,

she learned this trait in herself, that she was, in fact, afraid of getting into danger, but calmly courageous when once actually in peril. Amidst all the pleasures at her command, flattered by the marked attention of the King and Queen, and the praise of the Prince of Wales, there was one sore grievance which weighed upon her life—her mother's reproaches, that she would not encourage the addresses of any of her numerous admirers. Stung at finding this was laid to her overweening pride, she determined to strike a treaty with her mother, and sent for an uncle, to act as ambassador between them. The terms were, that her mother should cease for ever to tease her to marry a man she might dislike, and that she would marry any one her mother chose, whom she herself did not dislike. "Is this a fair treaty?" she inquired; and it being considered so, by the intervention of the uncle, it was forthwith concluded; and Lady Elizabeth, having thus shuffled off the weight of immediate care, gave herself up to the enjoyment of her recovered freedom—danced, sang, wrote poetry, and indulged her love of laughter with her youthful associates, free from the cloud of constantly impending matrimony. Brief, however, was this calm and peaceful interval. Mr. Craven, nephew of the then Lord Craven, had seen her at Covent Garden, and fallen violently in love with her. He commissioned Lord Wenman, who had been a frequent visitor at Lady Berkeley's during their stay in Paris, to acquaint her ladyship with his passion, and beg to be presented. His friend, who did not at first think him worthy of her, at length consented. "It is hardly possible to conceive my indignation at the idea of any man's daring to propose to me, without first asking my permission," writes the Margravine. Mr. Craven, however, obtained an introduction, and if no equally warm feelings of a reverse kind succeeded, the indignation speedily subsided. Mr. Craven, being third in the entail of his uncle's estates, was not absolutely ineligible in a worldly point of view; but Lord Craven, so firmly was the property tied up, could only make a settlement of eight hundred a year. Admiral Craven, however, another uncle, raised it out of his private means to fifteen hundred. But, while these negotiations were afoot among the elder folk, the young people were nearly coming to a misunderstanding, fatal to the proposed union. Mr. Craven, growing impatient, in the fashion of the day proposed an elopement, and being refused, protested the young lady did not love him. The reply was a confession, that love was certainly a stranger to her bosom, but that she felt a regard for his apparent warmth and honesty of heart. After saying, that he would leave the country till his uncle's death, Mr. Craven proposed a promise of marriage, "signed with his blood." This also was refused. "If I were to agree to such an arrangement," the Margravine reports herself to have replied, "if you should see any one you might prefer to me, or even like as well, or if I should fall in love, there might be four people made miserable." With equal sense she added, that she was resolved not to marry till she was twenty or twenty-one. The urgency of friends, and the intercession of relatives,

combined with the perseverance of Mr. Craven, sapped, in no long time, a resolution which even her mother had pretended to approve. First, the settlements were permitted to be drawn out, Admiral Craven adding twenty thousand pounds to the jointure for younger children. The marriage, it may be imagined, followed hard upon, and took place amidst, a more than usual amount of sobbing and sorrowing, to which the governess of the bride of sixteen, and her brother, Lord Berkeleigh, chiefly contributed.

In two years Mr. Craven had inherited the title and estates of his uncle. The marriage at its outset seems to have been in the most essential respects quite a happy one. The Margravine acknowledges that Lord Craven possessed the highest admiration for the refined character and many graces and accomplishments of his young wife; and the only contests between them were the amiable ones arising from his unbounded generosity towards her, and the refusals his offered presents met with from her discretion and modesty. One delicate trait of kindness deserves especial mention. On coming to his title, knowing the mutual affection which existed between Lady Craven and her governess, he went to the latter, and offered her a residence with her former pupil, excusing himself from not having done so before, as his house had not previously been large enough. Lady Craven bore her husband seven children; and up to the birth of the last child, with the exception of skirmishes between Lord Craven and Lady Berkeleigh, of the usual mother-in-law description, the faintest discord does not appear to have approached them. Before entering into the circumstances of the separation, which shortly afterwards took place with almost abrupt suddenness, it is not a little interesting to relate, that Lady Craven, having fallen ill immediately after her last confinement, seemed certainly doomed to a premature death, had not the sagacity of Jenner, whose great discovery had not then rendered him famous, detected the nature of her affection, mistaken by her other physicians, and restored her to health.

The same winter the discovery was made by Lady Craven which led to that eventful change in her life and fortunes, but for which, in all probability, the subject of this sketch would have attracted as little attention as many another brilliant and accomplished noblewoman of her day, the even tenor of whose way was not disturbed by such a domestic earthquake as we are about to allude to. Lord Craven had for some time absented himself for long periods from home, under pretexts which his wife discovered to be false. Instead of hunting in Wiltshire, he was known to have been in London, and not residing in his own house. A perceptible decrease in the pleasure he took in his children was also observed, and increased the anxiety of Lady Craven. All doubts, however, were removed, when Lord Macartney came to the injured wife and entreated her to prevent Lord Craven from travelling in one of his coaches with a woman calling herself Lady Craven, and conducting herself at inns in such a manner as to bring Lady Craven's own character into flag-

rant disrepute. "If Lord Berkeleigh knows this, he will certainly call Lord Craven out," added Lord Macartney. Upon this, the next time Lady Craven found herself alone with her husband, she told him she had a favour to ask him, which was, that he would not permit his mistress to call herself Lady Craven. After exhibiting a good deal of confusion at this apparently unexpected explosion of the mine of intrigue he had been carrying on, he walked about the room for some time, and at last asked how long Lady Craven had known of his infidelity. The reply was, "Above a twelvemonth." After a short pause he clasped his hands together, and exclaimed, "By G—, you are the best-tempered creature in the world; for I never suspected that you knew this." The following Christmas, Lord Craven, just before the holidays, which he had been in the habit of spending with his wife and children at one of his beautiful seats, called Lady Craven apart, and, with much embarrassment, said, "I am going to London; I shall not pass the Christmas here; and when I go, I shall not see your face again." Not to prolong unnecessarily the description of these painful circumstances, any knowledge of which, moreover, is based on an *ex-parte* statement, which, albeit uncontradicted, may not be altogether impartial, let it be simply recorded that Lord Craven set off the next day for London, and was quite as good as his word. Lady Craven never saw him again. In the difficulties of her position Lady Craven consulted Lord Thurlow, who advised her to go and live where she liked, but to leave her daughters with Lord Craven, —a measure which he sagaciously considered would prevent the cause of her misfortunes obtaining so complete an ascendancy over him. Lady Craven then informed her brother that she had resolved to go to France, taking with her her youngest child, a son. A promise was obtained from Lord Craven that her daughters should write to her every fortnight, and when she was in England she might send for them whenever she pleased. The calmness displayed by Lady Craven under these overwhelming trials,—a calmness which, accompanied as it was with the most perfect disinterestedness, surprised her mother, who exclaimed, "You do not even name Benham" (one of Lord Craven's seats, which her taste had greatly embellished),—was attributed by the Margravine to a lofty contempt for those who injured her. Her governess had discovered this trait, and had said, "*Vous ne haissez pas; mais vous faites pis, vous méprisez.*" By this light we must read the Margravine's subsequent behaviour. To have been made an idol of for years, and then capriciously and undeservedly to be cast aside with every mark of cruelty and almost savage aversion, is enough to rouse a spirit in the meekest and most submissive of natures, where, indeed, there is the faintest spark of self-respect. I was never able to discover the merits of the story of patient Grissell, nor do I think it would be at all good for the peace of married womankind if her example were extensively imitated; and when the Margravine writes, "I must confess that contempt—cool, rooted contempt,—was all I felt for Lord Craven's folly," I cannot

consider the straightforward confession of so very natural a reaction of feeling as otherwise than a very salutary warning to all husbands similarly disposed. Proudly stealing her heart against the heavy grief that had fallen upon her, Lady Craven departed for France with her youngest son. She returned a short time after to see her daughters, whom she reproached with not writing to her, when they replied they had been forbidden to do so by their father. Returning to Paris, she took up her residence in a convent of which the Princess de Beauveau was the abbess, and where, according to the Margravine, she became the object of certain intrigues on the part of Marie Antoinette, the purport of which is not very clear. She, however, takes credit to herself for having kept clear of these and of every other attempt to draw her into the vortex of political or court intrigues, to which she was frequently exposed during her multifarious travels, in the course of which she visited almost every great prince in Europe. She lays great stress on what are termed by her the "negative" qualities, that enabled her to move freely and safely in the midst of the entangling machinations which are ever at work round the palaces of sovereigns. The course of travel which she now undertook, as much, no doubt, in the endeavour to forget her wrongs as to gratify an active intellect, commenced with a journey to Italy; from thence she proceeded to Vienna, where she was received with kindness by the Emperor Joseph II., who offered her a residence for the winter. This she refused, conceiving that, as the emperor had so emphatically expressed his admiration of her, she might expose herself to injurious reports. She therefore fled rather than quitted Vienna at the end of ten days, and set out on her extraordinary journey to St. Petersburg, where the Empress Catherine treated her with marked attention. On her way she had visited the King of Poland, the unfortunate Stanislaus, and stayed two days with the Princess Czartoriska. After going the round of the magnificent entertainments given at the Court and the houses of the Russian nobility, Lady Craven took leave of the Semiramis of the North, and made her way to Constantinople, taking Moscow on her way, and passing through the Crimea. At Constantinople she was received at the palace of the French embassy, the ambassador at that time being M. de Choiseul-Gouffier. During her stay in the city of the Sultan, all the ambassadors gave entertainments in her honour. Accompanied by her host, M. de Choiseul, she paid a visit to Athens; and, in the course of this expedition, her companion induced her to descend into the celebrated grotto of Antiparos, and she is said to have been the first of her sex who had accomplished this exploit. It has been made a reproach to the Margravine of Anspach that she was not sufficiently struck with the awful grandeur of this mighty piece of Nature's handiwork, as such indifference argued a want of elevation and sensibility. It is not at all certain, however, that this deduction can be justified. Her hearty and sympathetic nature was certainly more affected by the presence of her fellow-creatures, and her active mind more stimulated by the observation

of various manners and characters, than by the grandest scenes of material nature. This is no proof, surely, however, of deficient sensibility in general, but only of a particular class; and indeed the most egotistical natures—Wordsworth's, Byron's, Rousseau's—have exhibited the most intense impressibility to the outward spectacle of the physical world. This is one of the thousand instances of the hastiness with which judgments are formed when there is a desire to depreciate. But to come back to our intrepid traveller. Returning from Athens, she passed through Asia Minor to Varna, Buckarest, Hermanstadt, and so to Vienna. Thence she returned to England by Holland, after an absence of nearly two years. The impressions of this comprehensive and rapid tour are conveyed in a narrative exhibiting the well-cultivated, sprightly, and observant mind of the Margravine.

During her stay in Paris, Lady Craven had received the visits of the Margrave of Anspach, who had known her from childhood, and had formed a strong attachment to her. He had now invited her to pass some time at Anspach, with himself and the Margravine, as his adopted sister. While in England, after her European tour, she consulted her mother as to the propriety of accepting this invitation, and received her approbation. She then wrote to Lord Craven, to apprise him of her intention, and intimating that, as he had broken his promise of allowing their children to write to her, she felt absolved from her own pledges, and would retain her youngest son. She then set out for Anspach. Christian Frederick Charles Alexander, Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, and Bareith, Duke of Prussia, Count of Sayn,—such were the name and titles of this adopted brother, who, before many years, was to become the faithful spouse. He was a nephew of Frederick the Great on his mother's side, and of Queen Caroline, wife of George II., on that of his father. While yet a boy, he had been forced into a marriage with a Princess of Saxe-Coburg, who seems to have been strangely unfit for a married life. The constant victim of bodily infirmity and pain, she was reduced to a state of mental apathy. Totally unsuited as such a being was to be the companion of an active and impulsive young man, the Margrave had always resisted the schemes of those who endeavoured to bring about a divorce. The cares of sovereignty do not appear to have been acceptable to the easy-going love of enjoyment which was the basis of the Margrave of Anspach's character, and the jealousies of the Houses of Austria and Prussia were the source of constant intrigues, which rendered his sway additionally troublesome. Lady Craven devoted herself to dissipate the dullness of so uncongenial a state of existence by establishing a theatre at Triesdorf, the winter residence of the Margrave, situate about three leagues from Anspach. Of this theatre she was manageress, and contributed also a number of light pieces to its *répertoire*. The "Théâtre de Triesdorf" is a collection of the original pieces played at Triesdorf, and the curious are referred to it for an idea of the dramatic and literary talent of Lady Craven. "La Folie du Jour," and "Abdoul et

Nourjad," are those principally cited by herself. She also, with the consent of the Margrave, established a literary and scientific society, of which M. Mercier, brother of the author of the *Tableau de Paris*, was made secretary; and she attempted to institute a school for girls of every rank, of which Mercier's wife was to be the directress. Owing to the jealousy her presence inspired, however, this project entirely failed; and Mercier soon after retired to Paris, whence he had been called, not without a small pension, however, which was kept up till he died, in 1823. During Lady Craven's residence at Anspach, which continued for five years, the Margrave made two journeys into Italy, accompanied by his adopted sister. The Margrave also paid a visit to Berlin, by invitation of the King of Prussia, to whom Lady Craven was formally introduced as his adopted sister, and a palace was allotted to her in that light. It was at this time that the Margrave, tired of his petty state, made over his territories to the King of Prussia. Lady Craven was asked to be present during the private conferences of the two sovereigns, which seemed to be protracted day after day without any satisfactory issue. On one occasion, the King of Prussia, observing Lady Craven suppress a smile, asked her reason for being amused. She replied frankly, that the idea floating in her mind was that they would never come to any arrangement unless they admitted a minister of finance into their secret. The king laughed, and said, "She is right; we must have Bernsprunger;" and the minister named was employed, who speedily settled the terms of the negotiation. On quitting Berlin the Margrave proceeded to Bareith, where he received the intelligence of the Margravine's death.

We now approach the *dénouement* of this strange eventful history. Six months after the death of the Margravine occurred that of Lord Craven, at Lausanne. Lady Craven was at Lisbon when the news reached her, living quietly and avoiding all parties, as she had been led to expect such an event. "As by the death of Lord Craven," she writes, "I felt myself released from all ties and at liberty to act as I thought proper, I accepted the hand of the Margrave without fear or remorse. We were married in the presence of one hundred persons, and attended by all the English naval officers, who were quite delighted to assist as witnesses." After a tour in Spain and a visit to Berlin, where the Margrave and his new Margravine were kindly received by the king, they proceeded to England. Here the Margravine was destined to receive a cruel blow to her affections and to her dignity. A letter signed by her three eldest daughters informed her, that, out of respect to their father, "with all due deference to the Margravine of Anspach," they could not wait upon her. Her eldest son, Lord Craven, and her brother, Lord Berkeleigh, equally neglected her. In answer to the reproaches of the latter for marrying six weeks after her first husband's death, she fearlessly replied, "She would have done so six hours after had she known it at the time." Whatever blame is to be attached to her for this somewhat reckless show of indomitable spirit in resenting her injuries, we

may be certain it was severely expiated by her. The refusal of the Queen to receive her at Court, even when she had acquired the rank of Princess of the Holy Roman Empire, was a bitter mortification to the proud spirit which had prompted the fault thus punished. Hers was not a nature, however, to pine under wrong, or allow itself to be crushed by the unjust judgment of the world. The Margrave settled his residence in England, and purchased Brandenburg House, on the banks of the Thames, and Benham, an estate in Berkshire which Lord Craven had sold, and in the improvement of which Lady Craven had bestowed much taste. The amusements at Brandenburg House, of which the Margravine was the spirited promoter, with a view, she tells us, of dissipating the occasional gloom to which the Margrave was subject, and in which we may believe she also sought a relief from painful reflections, were long celebrated as an important element of London fashionable life. In 1816 the Margrave died, and from that time the Margravine chiefly resided at Naples, where she died in the seventy-eight year of her age. It has been ill-naturedly said by some one, that she was of a school that has entirely passed away, and which it is not desirable to revive. I have failed in my intention if I have not shown in her not a few virtues and sterling qualities of heart and head, which, if they were allied with somewhat too independent a spirit to please the tyrannical nicety of what is called the world, are and ever will continue becoming to her sex.

John's Wife.

My name is Charles Freshe. I don't pretend to be a regular literary man. I can only write much as I talk, without picking my words. But I have earned money before now by my pen, and dip it now with the purest mercenary motive. Oh, I don't care about fame,—I am perfectly convinced it's sour; and I hate writing, and feel no confidence in my spelling. But the fact is, I wish to purchase a mug, as a token of affection for John's baby, from its attached godfather. Now I am but a poor curate, in a bitterly poor London parish; and when I go out I am up to my knees in lean babies, with poor little dirty mugs—and nothing to put in them; so that I should hardly feel justified in presenting a piece of plate at their expense to my plump nephew.

My brother John was born fifteen years before me, and my earliest recollection of him is connected in my mind with the costume of a midshipman in the Royal Navy, to which institution he belonged. Our father died when I was just old enough to shout with pride at my black clothes, new from top to toe. He was a clergyman, with a tolerable living in Devonshire. For some years I was always suspected of going into a decline, and never actually went. But I lost my poor mother, who faded away in a consumption when I was a puny lad of sixteen.

She had hold of John's fingers, and pressed them quite strongly not five minutes before she died, and gasped, "John, John, take care of my boy for me." I was there, too, with my face down on the counterpane, and her other hand on my head.

John did take care of me, God knows. He was not married then, but he took me home to all the home he could give me, a little lodging at Portsmouth. He was a lieutenant on board the flagship there. Our landlady was the sweetest, foolish old creature, who only wanted wings to be an angel or a goose. She coddled me so unmercifully, that I came out of her hands twice as puny as I went into them. In-doors and out, night and day, she insisted on my living in a dreadful respirator, that covered my nose as well as my mouth, and made me dream that I was the Man in the Iron Mask.

At last John came one day and told me that he was "made," which, it seems, is the naval for becoming the next thing to what an officer happens to be; after which, it appears that he is immediately taken to pieces again, as the same expression is used on every subsequent similar occasion. If ever a man looked just made, and as bright as a new penny, John did when he added, with an honest red in his face, that he was going to be married directly to Elizabeth Mackenzie. I knew that he had been engaged to her for almost two years. Well, I was eighteen by this time, and felt that I must not be a great baby on my brother's hands any

more. So I shook hands with him and said, "John, I am glad with all my heart for you, and God bless you and Elizabeth; and now, I'll—I'll do something, and be something like a man, and take care of myself in future, as a man ought." John clapped me once or twice gently on the shoulder without saying a word, and then turned away suddenly to stir the fire. But in the little looking-glass over the chimney-piece I saw his good, sunburnt, square face, and two or three tears were running down it. Then I felt, just the same as if he had told me, that I was not likely to be a care and trouble to my dear old Jack much longer.

About three months after his marriage I caught a great cold, in consequence of leaving off my respirator one lovely spring day, and had an inflammation of the lungs. But John's wife was a capital nurse, and helped me, as John expressed it, to weather the doctors. And then I really seemed to get better every hour, as if that illness had been the curing of me, or perhaps the great concluding crash of the thunderstorm that had threatened and growled at me all my life. However, one day, John's wife came up to my sofa and said, "Charley, how shall you like to go to Italy for a year or two? because we are going to take you, whether you like it or not. The new doctor says all you want is warm air and plenty of it, and that in a hot climate you'll get as strong as an Irish porter."

"Stouter than Dublin stout," suggested John, who was having some for luncheon.

Cheerfully as they did it, they sacrificed a great deal more, and in more ways, than I had the least idea of to their troublesome sick lad. If I had known this, I hope I should not have taken it all so easily as I did. But I had been petted and poor-Charley'd all my life, you see, till every thing every body did for me came a good deal too much as a matter of course. To be saved the necessity of taking thought for oneself is curiously apt to make one take all the more. In the first place, John gave up the little cottage he was going to buy near his wife's father. Colonel Mackenzie was a widower, almost eighty, and very infirm; and Elizabeth, who was his only unmarried child, had left him at last to marry John, in the full belief that they were still to live close together. But John "took care" of my mother's boy, and carried him to Italy, and John's wife went with John; and while she was far away, the poor old man died in a servant's arms.

Hereabouts, my recollections seem to take very picturesque forms. The little voyage from Marseilles to Naples, for instance. I sit, in gorgeous blue weather, on the deck of a steamer, as it pants through the summer sea, past great shadowy mountain shores. My heart feels brimful, and I can't help crying, though I was never so exquisitely happy before. John's wife is afraid the excitement will hurt me. Not a bit—but, on the contrary, shoots quite a new sort of healthy life into my poor young bones and blood. Just after a refulgent sunset, the first of June,

we came to a full stop in the bay. A broad rosy blush overspreads half the heavens, dyeing the silvery water and the quays and the moving throngs. I see Vesuvius stand up, thwarted by a golden cloud which slowly draws past, from the purple peaks and the lucid sky.

Before we had been at Naples three months, I felt perfectly well. I had fairly come out of that prison of invalidism, and held up my head in the sun, and blessed God under the blue. The extremest heat and blaze of the southern summer did me nothing but good; no amount of thermometer put me down; I basked like a lizard, and chirped as impudently as a cicada. I bathed, I boated, I drew crooked sketches, and I wrote lame and dismal verses, after the manner of young persons blessed with exuberant spirits. We knew several pleasant people that happened to be at Naples, and so found a ready-made little society, that fitted us perfectly. But now John's wife had fallen ill, or, if not ill, into what I may call a state of nerves. She was always irritable when she was not gloomy. Her nice clear-cut face grew hatchety, and her bright black eyes dim and red-rimmed, or wild and miserably eager. John was wretched, and sent for a doctor, who disinterestedly advised change of air.

Now, when the doctor had given this prescription, we couldn't just ring the bell that day after dinner, and desire the courier to be sent up, and, when he came, say to him, "O Pips, we are going to Jerusalem (or Jersey) to-morrow. Settle every thing, you know, and have the carriage at the door by half-past ten. And oh, Pips, here's a hundred pounds, you know." And when he had put them into his leathern pouch and vanished, go to bed and to sleep while the servants sat up all night to pack. We couldn't, because we had no carriages, nor couriers with leathern pouches, nor hundred pounds to put in them. When we wanted change of air, or indeed any thing, we had first to consider if we could get it at all, and then the cheapest way. Our pecuniary circumstances were, to speak delicately, the reverse of illimitable; and just now they were particularly straitened, for the journey from England and a rather expensive lodging (all for me) had nearly stranded us, John said, till next quarter-day. I hope we shall not be condemned for having a small income; I am sure we would have a larger one if we could. John's wife looks very dignified when on this subject, and says if we have not money we have Blood. Not that I can see the point of her observation, for I am positive there exists not the sanguinary and eccentric baker (for instance) who would accept, indifferently, the fluid in question for 8s. 11½d., the amount of our last week's bread-bill. However, I know John's wife would be vexed if I did not mention that her mother was a niece of the Countess of Cockernony, and her grandmother—I'm not sure, though I have been told so often,—but I rather think her grandmother was a bishopess. At all events, I can distinctly affirm that John's wife, by-her-self—John's-wife, is one of the dearest and best little women in the world,

and one of the best gentlewomen too, except when she bothers about Lady Cockernony and the Bishopess. Yet, after all, I don't see how she can help it, being a Scotchwoman. But ah, John's wife had a worse flaw than that in her fine porcelain. She had the flaw of a jealous temper. I found this out long before John did. The first time she had a fit after her marriage I thought she was in fun, and laughed at her. But I soon discovered that sport to me was death to her, and then I grew serious enough; for I saw how the small black cloud no bigger than a man's hand threatened to swallow up the whole heaven of this dear couple. At first Elizabeth (as she has since confessed) simply felt jealous of every woman John spoke to; and she had frequent little passing attacks of suspicion, that made squally domestic weather. It would have sorely tried any temper less sweet, and any affection less unselfish, than John's. But I believe he never, even at the worst, quite comprehended her unhappy disease. I have seen him stand looking at her with the purest anxiety clouding his kind face; and when she answered his tender inquiries sullenly, or pushed him away if he tried to kiss her, or sarcastically bade him seek the society he preferred, he would stand looking at her again, piteously,—that great strong John,—like a child that its mother snubs. At last Elizabeth pounced on a particular object to convert into food for her green-eyed monster. This was Kitty Haile, a little invalid girl of sixteen, the daughter of an old naval friend of John's. Captain Haile had married late in life, and was a widower. He seemed passionately fond of his only child, this poor little white-faced Kitty. No doubt she suffered a good deal from the mysterious bone complaint, on account of which they had been visiting the baths of Ischia; but I own I thought her a peevish, petulant little creature, although rather pretty, and admired the heavenly patience and tenderness of her dear old father. In short, she did not like me much, nor I her. She took a great fancy at first to John's wife, who also at first bestowed a good deal of sincere compassion on the poor child; until John himself came to be very much with little Kitty, who had known him all her life, and called him Uncle John, and probably perceived very little difference as to age between him and her father. He, for his part, often came to fetch John, that he might coax her into following some medical injunction which his own entreaty seemed only to set her against. The fond old captain used to talk of her very much as if she were six months old, and fractious in teething, calling her his Peetums-keetums, his Pitsy-itsy-kitsy, and such like, which annoyed the girl, probably because she *was* a babyish little thing. John, pitying both, did all he could to soothe and occupy the fretful little sufferer. He taught her chess; and many a time she sent her father for Uncle John with a peremptory message that the men were waiting, and so was she. John seldom refused to obey her summons, though any one in their senses might have seen he could hardly have gone to amuse *himself*. But his wife was not in her senses, and every day brought fresh aggravation to her insanity.

She herself had quite left off visiting Kitty Haile; and that little damsel, resenting the neglect (and never dreaming of the cause), used to abuse her to me as much as she dared, pitying poor Uncle John for having married such a cross old thing. N.B. Elizabeth was twenty-six. It was while family matters were in this state that John, to give his wife what change he could, determined that we should go to Capri.

So one afternoon, late in August, we get into a boat with four oars and a striped awning, and travel swiftly across the windless bay. Our mariners stand up on the seats and row with lithe and lusty strokes, their faces set towards Capri. Their picturesque attitudes, the Indian swartheness of their half-naked limbs, their loose white drawers and bright-coloured woollen caps, complete the gorgeous picture around us. Sometimes they sing in low voices, sometimes chatter and grin, half-turning dark faces a-glitter with eyes and teeth. Soon the superb and lovely isle rears itself before us. Enormous precipices, dove-coloured, changeable, softly shadowy with azure glooms that mitigate the golden dazzle. On the right, the huge peak of Anacapri; on the left, the lion-like promontory called the Rock of Tiberius; and in the middle hollow, yet far above the beach, the little town of Capri. All the heights and depths of the mountains are dark, with vast thickets of myrtle, arbutus, and bay, or bright with vine-garlands among the figs and pomegranates. While we are still a yard or two from the marina, a dozen fish-wives, plunging up to their knees in the transparent water, hold out strong brown arms of assistance. They haul in the boat, they haul us out, they lug forth our luggage, and two sturdy nereids, hoisting trunk and carpet-bag on their heads, stride up to yonder little hotel on the cliff to the right. We follow, climbing a steep path, diverging presently down a garden, through an entry, and coming out on a charming loggia. The hotel is but a tiny villa on a shelf of the cliff. It has five or six bedrooms, two of which open by glass doors on this covered loggia, which is the common parlour. And over the parapet of this loggia, adorned with great pots of pink clustering oleanders, I behold all the bay, and, right in front, Vesuvius robed in sunset. And, leaning on the parapet, I can see the variegated pebbles, rocks, and seaweed at the bottom of the green and purple water below.

John is paying the boatmen and the nereids, and bargaining with the landlord. Elizabeth has been inspecting the two bedrooms opening on the loggia, which we have secured. Now she comes out of the larger one, crying, "Cameriera! Cameriera!" A lame, dismal young man, with lank black hair and moustache, who appears to have something on his mind, limps up through a trapdoor from an underground region. He is all the chambermaid Elizabeth will get. He is also, we subsequently learn, the waiter and the cook, and most likely the washerwoman. He limps to the glass doors, and I follow. Elizabeth points to a little smoky, evil-odoured lamp, underneath a sixpenny coloured print of the Madonna in a wooden frame. "Take it away," says Mrs. Freshe decidedly; "*non mi*

va." The chambermaid with the lank moustache pauses a moment before he obeys, then slowly lifts the lamp and limps off with it, muttering something,—possibly an apology to the Madonna. And when we have been here about a week, we, sitting in the loggia one day, perceive Donino, the chambermaid, limp into Elizabeth's room, and presently limp out again. On his return we observe that he has got the sixpenny Madonna under his arm, and we ask what he is going to do with that pictorial gem. Donino replies moodily, "'Cellenzi, she has now been eight days without her lamp. She will bear it no longer. There is no end to the crockery broken in this house."

In a short time John's wife became wonderfully restored. Her appearance and spirits recovered all their cheerful charm. No doubt she throve on the savage natural beauty and savage island air about her, but chiefly on the absence of all opportunity for self-torment.

Then one night late, and quite unexpectedly, arrived Captain Haile from Naples. He had been there all alone for a week past, detained by business; his daughter was with some female friends at Salerno. He had taken them by water round the Gulf, and had then been obliged to return to Naples. His daughter wished to remain at Salerno a few weeks, fancying herself better there; and he was now on his way to visit her, although he could only be absent two nights. *En route* he had come to Capri, to beg that John would accompany him. Indeed he showed us a note from his little spoilt Kitty, ordering him to bring Uncle John, or not dare to show his own face.

I needed but a glance at Elizabeth to discover that the evil spirit clutched her poor heart again more fiercely than ever. She got up and went into her room, and appeared no more. But it was already so late that her absence excited no remark. It was settled that Captain Haile and John should start next morning at sunrise, and thus reach Salerno by about mid-day. They would remain there the following night, and return to Capri early the day after. We then separated, Captain Haile going to one of the little bedrooms, fortunately vacant, and John to his own room. I remained awhile, leaning over the parapet, enjoying the balmy September dark, into which the approaching moon-rise seemed to flow perceptibly. It was two or three nights past full moon; and while I watched the faint glow broaden and brighten where she was coming up over the Rock of Tiberius, I was startled by John's voice, loud and stern, within his own room. The glass doors were not closed, and I had heard without heeding the sound of talk there for some time. But now John spoke as I had never heard him speak before, and this was what he called out:

"Retract what you have said!" and then, louder still, "they are shameful words—retract them!"

Then Elizabeth came out, a darting white figure, and John strode after her. It was quite light enough now to see them. He came in front of her, and put his hands on her arms, and so held her, while she

writhed, uttering stifled ejaculations. He did not speak till she stood still, and then he only said, "My wife, you must retract those words."

She endeavoured again to wrench herself away, and muttered resentfully, "You hurt me—you hurt me, sir."

"You know I can't intend that," said he, and presently added, in a voice that now trembled and was tender, "O my wife, my wife! you could not mean it; you cannot persist. It must be your pride that holds out. . . . Well, I was too rough with you; but, my girl, they were shameful words, unworthy of you and of me."

Elizabeth slipped out of his hold, now relaxed, gave him a scornful little push on the breast, and ran from him. She turned on the threshold of her room, and cried,

"Go to the little wanton who is worthy of you! And I wish to God I had never seen your face, and I wish to God I may never see it more."

That was what she said, the poor frantic thing.

She entered the bedroom and shut herself in, audibly bolting the doors. John stood still where she had left him, except that by a quick movement he covered his eyes with one hand. Then I ran up and seized the other. "O John, John," I said, "don't mind; it will be all right when she has time to think."

He answered nothing; but when he uncovered his face, I saw that it had lost its softer expression, and had even a touch of disgust. I saw that he was profoundly pondering on what had past, and I could partly understand how it must have embittered his loyal and tender nature. The shock must, indeed, have been severe to him, who had never even remotely guessed at those frantic suspicions and evil fancies which had long filled his wife's heart with poison—poison that had now run over at her lips. He put up his hand to stop me when I began to speak again, and presently asked me to leave him and go to bed—he would come to my room shortly. When he did so, he rolled up a great-coat for a pillow, and stretched himself quietly on the floor. At dawn I thought he was asleep, when I got up and went into the loggia. There I saw Elizabeth, sitting motionless, a shawl covering her head, staring over the parapet. She never turned her face, though she must have heard us both come out, for John immediately followed me.

The sun was now rising, and the tenderest pink and azure began to run into the lovely pearly world before us.

I saw a hope come and die in John's eyes as he caught sight of his wife, and as he perceived that she steadily averted her face when he passed her to go and dress in his room. Presently he reappeared, ready with his overcoat on his arm, and again lingered, with a wishful look she did not see, near Elizabeth's motionless figure.

And then Donino, that gloomy gnome, uprose through the trap, bearing a coffee-tray; and Captain Haile's voice, "coming ere he came," was heard in the entry. John went a few steps to meet him, and Eliza-

beth, drawing her shawl closer over her face, ran across the loggia, bolting herself once more into her bedroom.

In a quarter of an hour they were off. I accompanied them to the boat,—a gay little toy we had often hired at Naples, and furnished with two boatmen. Captain Haile proposed my joining the expedition; but I could not have found it in my heart to leave Elizabeth at this moment, and I knew John would have been hurt if I had. He squeezed my hand silently as he jumped in, but good old Captain Haile turned his face, nodded, and sang out as they were gliding off,

“Good by, God bless ye, my dear lad.”

I like to remember that he did.

All that day I saw little of my companion, and I believe she did not speak a single word to me. She was in her own room most of the time, and I, a good deal oppressed by a certain suffocating quality in the atmosphere, spent the afternoon lying on a bench in the loggia, a book on my knees, but my eyes shut.

It is a good while ago, but when I think of it I still seem to listen half asleep to the ceaseless sigh of the ripple below, mixed with the pleasant plash of oars, while an aromatic fragrance strikes up on my face from some passing boat, deep laden with fresh-cut myrtle-branches, to be stored for winter fuel.

At night, loitering again in the loggia, where, however, it was hardly cooler than in my little room, I heard John's wife crying bitterly behind her half-closed doors, and, as I thought, praying. I was so glad; I clapped my hands softly, and thanked God.

Next morning the weather was still fair, but more and more stifling as the day grew. Captain Haile and John, according to their own calculation, were to be at Capri again early in the afternoon. Elizabeth seemed more cheerful, as if she had squared accounts with her conscience, and was resolved to pay what she owed to the uttermost farthing. She brought her work into the loggia, and we sat silent; but I saw a cleared-up heart in her handsome dark eyes when she raised them, although the traces of rainy weather were still on their lids.

But just at twelve o'clock a deadly gloom crawled over the shining bay and shores. Then a black blot of cloud spread like the monstrous shadow of a hand over the whole sky, all but two or three lurid streaks, like the divisions of the fingers, that made the dreadful eclipse more portentous. And suddenly, like the very bursting of the gates of hell, the tempest broke, with a ghastly zigzag flare of lightning, and a thunder-crash and a roaring of wind that seemed to threaten the world! It was but the vanguard of a storm so terrific and indescribable that none who have not witnessed the like can properly comprehend the horror of it. As for us, we remained holding by the pillars of the loggia, appalled and bewildered. An inky blinding rack of cloud and rain rushed across, torn by lightning, scourged by the screaming blast. Nothing else was visible except the sea just below, leaping ghastly white in the blackness.

tormented into mad rage, churning and breaking and tumbling among the rocks.

And in a short half-hour all this wild war had swept off, suddenly as it overcame; and the sun broke out gloriously with the last thunder-clap. As if (I thought, being indifferent-poetical) the demons of the storm had been driven back to their inferno, and the gate slammed after the hindmost, while the angels of light and peace floated back, and magnetised the world with their shining hands.

The sun set that evening in a cloudless sky, over a languidly-heaving blue sea, fast falling to a dead calm.

John had not returned.

His wife and I got up from the dinner we could not eat, and silently reseated ourselves close to the parapet, where we had already sat and watched for many hours of growing terror. We knew that we both thought of that which we dared not face, much less utter. We looked fixedly towards the barren cliff of Massa, till I believe we both painted on it, more than once, that white sail which was the desire of our hearts. Twilight fell. No boat had glided towards Capri through that narrow strait between the cliff on the Continent and the Rock of Tiberius. But suddenly, behind the doubling folds of the dusk, and already near shore, we perceived a large boat, which might have approached over that threshold between the Bay and the Gulf.

Elizabeth started up, clapping her hands with a shriek, and a face that almost brightened the dark. Alas, in spite of this gathering darkness, my eyes had not deceived me. I had instantly seen that this was not the gay little Neapolitan cockleshell, but a great brown clumsy fishing-boat, unlike as a lumbering cockchafer to a butterfly. The poor wife! I tried to comfort her. I told her how probable it was that weatherwise seamen would foresee the storm, and delay until it had passed; that they might still arrive in an hour or two, or at latest to-morrow morning. All the while my own convictions contradicted my own words, which yet appeared to have most reason on their side.

It was past eleven o'clock, when Elizabeth at length left the loggia, and went into her room with a look on her face worse to see than any anguish that can utter itself. She had hardly gone, when a slight noise made me turn my head, and I dimly discerned our landlord, Don Salvatore, who stood in the doorway of that passage-room which led through the house.

"Tst, tst, Signor," said he softly, beckoning me.

When I went to him, I found quite a number of persons assembled in this entry, which was only lighted by the smoky little lamp now restored to the nose of that unfastidious Madonna. "Eccellenza," said Don Salvatore, "there is sad news for the poor Signora. This worthy person, Tito, at your service, will relate to you the disastrous particulars." I remember how the man mouthed his words, having that sort of florid, histrionic genius common to his country and class. Then, while my heart

failed me for fear, they pushed forward a swarthy, half-naked fellow, smelling of his boat, a Capriote whom I knew.

"'Cellenza," said he, speaking abruptly, yet with a certain gentleness, "I come from the Gulf. At noon, I ran into Amalfi, just as the storm broke. When I was yet half a mile from the shore, I perceived, a good way off, the boat with the two English captains, which approached from Salerno. Now I knew that boat well. Did it not belong to Paulo Magri, of Pausilipo, who married Caterina the sister of my wife Maria, at your service? 'Gnor, mio! that boat did not take in its sail like all the others. Why? (spreading out his hands and shrugging his shoulders.) Ignorance, imprudence—*chi lo sà?* And so that great devil of a burrasca rushed up and caught her, and clawed her under water before one could speak so much as a word to the Madonna. (A pause.)

"'Cellenza, they are all drowned. Doubtless, they could swim; but it appears their time was come. I, Tito, was not so near as others, but they picked up, among them, one of the English captains. It was said that he lived a few minutes, but some portion of the boat had struck him somewhere. I, for my part, did not see his dead body, but this I know, they brought it to a certain house near the beach at Amalfi, where it now lies."

I heard it all through a loud noise in my ears, as of the furious sea and wind that had raged round my brother's dying head. Through that din I seemed to hear myself, like some other person, say feebly, "Thanks, go; I will tell her—"

"Jesu Maria!" cried Don Salvatore's wife, turning round towards the loggia; "la Signora is here!"

I can see her now, in the dim entrance. She was leaning sideways against the doorpost, her head thrust forward into the room, all the little light from the smoky lamp on the awful horror of her face. She had heard the whole. I darted and caught her in my arms. She shuddered strongly, and I saw her poor locked mouth working. . . . At last, she articulated the words, "Amalfi—boat—go—" I understood her by instinct. "Yes, yes," I whispered; and turned to the little staring, sympathising crowd.

"We want a boat; we wish to go to Amalfi. Four oars—six; and instantly! We will be on the beach in two minutes."

"Bene, 'Cellenza," cried Tito, and vanished in the act of reply.

I sent every one out except Don Salvatore's wife. I placed Elizabeth on a couch; I dashed water on her face; then I made her swallow wine. I found myself, for the first time, forced to act for others, and to forget myself. I gave up my own anguish, or withdrew it reverently from the sacred presence of the widow's. I felt that my puny boyhood was gone, thus called on to stand up like a man and sustain this fainting, smitten woman. I wrapped her shawl about her, and even tied the strings of her hat, while she remained passive, and (I thought) half-stunned, where I had placed her. However, when I had got an armful of cloaks and

coats, she seemed to know all was ready, before I could tell her. She started up, seized my arm, and hurried away down the steep path to the beach. It was past midnight; the moon had not yet risen, but the dark was becoming diaphanous. We could discern, as we approached, a large boat already pushed into the silky black water, and a dim, silent little throng at the edge of the sea. There was nothing to be heard but the tinkling wash on the stones, and the hollow noise of the oars in the boat, as the rowers got them ready to their hands. Men and women pressed forward to help us in; and as we floated off, I heard a low sympathising whisper behind us,—“*La povera Signora!*”

We had three pairs of oars, and we seemed to leap over the sleepy water. As we darted on our way, I caught sight of the ghastly moon in her third quarter, half risen over the Rock of Tiberius. The huge silhouette of the mountain stood out iron-black and hard, and notched with bushes. I remember thinking the moon looked over it like a fierce spectral Eye, in which some jag of myrtle-thicket represented the leonine pupil.

All that September night we two sat side by side without speaking, in a dull horror, without hope; and all night both of us, as I afterwards knew, saw the dead frozen face of John as plainly as though we had already numbed our lips against its icy forehead. Yet at the same time I took note, I remember, as if with quite a separate mind, of the patient strength of those white-clothed rowers, who all night long, without an instant's pause, for ever threw themselves forward on their stalwart strokes. The boat bounded to that measured and musical plash; moon and stars filled the solemn hours with radiance; the Italian night was warm as English day. We coasted swiftly round the Gulf: now a great looming precipice; now a white village, shining asleep on the beach; again the cliff-shadows;—until at last the rowers rested on their oars, pointed to certain faint cold streaks, and cried, “*Il giorno!*” Soon those buds of light blossomed rosily into flowers; then the white-clothed, swarthy rowers stood out like carven men; the Gulf became silvery; near shore we beheld it specked with sian-floats, and spotted with dark silhouettes of boats and figures in them. The sun burst up between two dusky peaks of the mountains above Pæstum, and struck the water all about us into golden sparkles; the oars flashed, dripping jewels, as our rowers drew them in, and our keel grated on the pebbly beach of Amalfi.

With that Elizabeth started up into life and motion; before any one could help her, she had bounded from one end of the boat to the other, sprung off the edge to the strand, and run several yards up the steep shingles. Then the sudden unnatural strength and energy deserted her; she stopped, tottered, and sank down. When I came to her, she was crouched in a heap, her face on her knees. Now I had ascertained from some Amalfi boatmen on the beach, as well as from Tito, that the drowned man had been carried into a lower room of the hotel nearest the sea, and close before us at this moment. I said, “Let me go, Elizabeth,”

in a faint voice, for I was trembling and sick; being but a boy, and this my only brother, perhaps, whose dead body I was going to identify. But Elizabeth got up again, and whispered, in a solemn, hushed way, "Come," turning her face to me. She had taken off her straw hat during the night—probably it distressed her aching head; in its place she had tied her white handkerchief under her chin; she wore it still, and it may have made her hair and eyes look blacker, and her face ghastlier. It was a miserable face to meet: the lips parched, and forced apart; the nostrils pinched, the eyes hollow and stupid;—I have seen half-starved persons look so.

Some of the boatmen had already obtained admittance at the hotel, and warned the people of our coming. We found the doors open, and several persons collected, who ranged themselves silently to give us entrance. One of them stepped on, opened an inner door, and, as we passed in, closed it behind us.

It was a large long room; all the windows and wooden blinds wide open, painfully light, cheerful, and chill. There seemed nothing in it but a table,—and on the table that which we sought; barely covered by a scant sheet, that gave a blunted outline of the form underneath, like the rudiments of a statue. I snatched my eyes away,—I shut them for an instant; my own heart sank cold as death. But Elizabeth roused me by loosing her hand from mine, which clutched it. She walked by herself up to the table, drew off the sheet—and dropped senseless.

Not John! No; a venerable head, an old ashen-gray dead face, that had taken a solemn dignity since we saw it last. Alas for the sick little petted girl, that must now learn by its loss to value the love quenched in that death!

But I covered the old man's face, shuddering; and then, utterly unable to raise Elizabeth in my nerveless arms, staggered to the door, and called in some women who stood about. When I had seen Elizabeth lifted and carried out of the room, I walked dizzily away from the hotel out on the beach, where I sat down on a ridge of the shingles to get back my senses and strength. Presently my blood flowed more freely; I began to think distinct thoughts again. As I sat there thus recovering myself, I was accosted by several Amalfi boatmen, and was conscious that they were speaking in a rough but sympathetic way of the accident which they seemed to have witnessed. At first I could hardly listen from one sentence to another. Then a word, a *number*, frequently repeated, caught my attention, and by degrees a specific idea detached itself from the confusion of my mind. It was like a trembling ray of light that crept into my heart. I perceived that these men always spoke of *three* persons in the Neapolitan boat that had gone down in their sight. With wild eagerness I questioned them. They persisted.

"*Gnor, si!* Two boatmen, who are still at the bottom of the Gulf, and that old foreign signor, who is there (with a backward motion of the hand to the hotel behind us). Doubtless (with insinuating curiosity)

the father of his excellency, and of the poor signora who came with him?"

I started up; the agony of reviving hope made me shriek; coming to life from drowning must be less hard to bear. I dared not believe—I was ready to die while I doubted!

"Listen," said I, struggling to speak distinctly, and holding my head between my hands, with a sensation of becoming idiotical—"Tito, of Capri, also saw this boat go down, but he spoke of *two* foreign signors,—*two*,—listen well,—besides the two boatmen."

"Tito is an ass!" cried all the Amalfitani at once. Then they let one speak for the rest. "Was not this Tito a mile off, in the fog, and were not we but a half-quarter? Moreover, had he not enough to do in his own crazy old boat? *Caro 'cellenza!* That which we tell you, we know, for we saw. . . . *Tre, non piu!*"*

Oh, God heard the prayer my heart said! I burst out laughing, I burst out crying; I turned to run to *her*. I turned back to pour out my purse into the brown hands of those blessed Amalfitani. I felt as if I had no legs, but skimmed like a swallow to the place where I had left Elizabeth! As I entered the hotel, I met her, coming sadly. But before I could speak, her dilated eyes fixed themselves on some object behind me; as I turned, following their wild stare, she shrieked out the name that was on my own lips, and flying past me with outstretched arms, fell to the earth, clasping them about the knees of—John!

His sunburnt face turned quite white with surprise. I think he was as much terrified as he ever was in his life, to see her there and thus. He could, however, raise her up, and support her into the house, while I followed, clinging to his arm, patting it, sobbing and laughing. When we were shut into a room, he sat down with his wife in his arms, and endeavoured to calm her by his tenderness. She shed torrents of long pent up tears, hiding her face in his breast.

By and by we came to mutual explanations. John had met an acquaintance at Salerno, who had asked him to spend another day there, in order to accompany him to Rocera, and elsewhere. John did not say so, but, by her bitter sigh, Elizabeth thought how willing he must have been to stay away. The sore heart she had given him might well make him shrink from the idea of her and home. Poor Captain Haile had undertaken to account at Capri for his friend's absence. Later last night than the news had reached us, the rumour of the boatwreck had come to John's ears, on his return to Salerno. No details, and nothing authentic, however; only that the boat had gone down in the burrasca, somewhere between Salerno and Amalfi. John called up the ladies who had assumed the charge of poor little Kitty Haile, and, telling them of the report, begged they would take care no hint of it reached her at present. Then

* "Three, no more!"

he set off (by land) to discover the truth of the story, making inquiries as he went at every village on the coast. Such vague answers as he got had guided him to Amalfi, where he was immediately directed to the hotel in which lay the corpse of his poor old friend.

"O John, John!" said Elizabeth, sobbing, "I have been a wicked wretch, a hateful bad creature; but let me—let me go to her!"

John, knowing very well she meant his friend's orphan, the poor child at Salerno, answered, with noble simplicity and affection,

"My dear wife, I am thankful to you. No one would tell her so tenderly."

Elizabeth cried out, clinging to him,

"O John, John! how good you are!"

And dishevelled, jaded, blurred with tears as she was, I think John's wife never looked so charming and so lovable as when she kissed her husband's hand humbly, and faltered, with downcast eyes,

"Yes, you forgive me, I know, and believe in me before I am proved; but, oh, I think this dreadful night must have burnt the wicked, thankless folly out of my heart."

M. B.

On Quacks.

QUACKS are of all kinds. It has been the fashion, though, to confine the word to men who presume to heal disease without having paid for the permission neatly engrossed on a skin of parchment, with a heading in old-English capitals bordered with flourishes. These are the quacks *par excellence*,—legitimate descendants of that famous old original who used to parade Paris, with his little son crying in a shrill voice before him: "My papa cures all sorts of diseases!" handsome, burly papa answering, in his rich diapason: "The child speaks true!"

Now it is undoubtedly desirable that men should not act without the countenance of the pastors and masters of their profession—too much independence of any kind generally resolving itself into license; and certainly medical quacks of the more unblushing sort are just so many human reptiles, noxious and loathsome and insufferable to the cleanly soul; but there are worse evils in the world, and more dangerous quacks too, for the matter of that, than even unlicensed practitioners or country bonesetters; and Æsculapius is not the only god who harbours poachers on his preserves. There is the quack moral, the quack literary, and the quack educational; the quack political, and the quack religious; each of whom is as thorough-going an impostor as the veriest sham who ever advertised his universal panacea, and got poor simple fools to testify to the efficacy of a couple of bread-pills coloured with gamboge and rubbed up with assafoetida and flour. Mind, I am not excusing the quack medical. I am only saying that if he limps on both feet, there are others who walk on crutches; if his life throws a shadow, black, rugged, and awry, there are others not a whit whiter, and with edges just as tattered.

Take the quack moral,—he who pretends to dissect mankind with as much ease as a Chinese puzzle, but who has never traced one thought to its source, or followed the pulsings of one of the thousand veins netting the surface of the heart:—is the vendor of a vegetable sham, or the maker-up of lard and nastiness, so very much more dishonest a member of society than he? To my thinking, the quack moral is the greater humbug of the two, and not half so amusing. The quack moral is never at fault. He knows the motive principle of all men, and can put his finger on the universal passion. He can tell down the price necessary to pay for every soul, and balances the exact worth of all the virtues; and he, too, has found the one specific which, if you possess in due amount, you will do well, but if you are without, all in excess of the rest of the code goes for nothing. Sometimes it is universal charity; sometimes it is truth; now it is strength of will; not infrequently, in England, it is purity and wholeness in the home relations; but it is absolutely necessary that you have one central and governing virtue to which your life is polarised,

and equally necessary that the quack moral has the settling of your heavens. Quack morality is imperfect and one-sided; but the teacher is never disturbed by fears of the insufficiency of his doctrine. When he gives you to drink of the eternal ocean in a broken tea-cup, he vaunts the liberality of his draught, and is careful to tell you that it is drawn from the exact centre, and so has mystic relations with all the parts. It is only his broken tea-cup which has these mystic relations; only his rusty bucket that dipped into the living fountain flowing straight from the heart of nature; no other man's draught is worth the swallowing, and as for a sip from each—does not a mixture of all the colours blend into a dirty white, neutral and dead? and would not the cultivation of all the virtues result in the practice of none? So at least says the quack moral, busy in reducing human life to its primitive elements. The quack moral is exclusive, and the partisan of one star over another star. He believes nothing of the equal glory of the planets or the democratic royalties of star-dust. To him the heavens have but one sun, with his own name written full across the globe; and those who worship other suns worship only parhelia, set up to bewilder and delude. As he is exclusive, so is he without sympathy. This is of the essential nature of things. If he is a puritan, he has no mercy to show for the wild sins of passion, or the broader dangers of the flesh; if he is of the more sensual kind, and regardless of what he usually terms humanity,—by which he means only the more animal part of man,—he has no admiration for the sterner mental virtues, the conscientiousness which holds unworthy thought as low as graceless deed, the pitiless purity which cuts off the right hand because of that light purple stain across the palm, and the sacrifice to the Lord must be without spot or blemish. He calls this fanaticism, and vaunts himself of love and universal charity; but his charity is a cloak only for the rags of his own loom, and his love lies in the bed of Procrustes and finds very few of his own standard. Perhaps, of the two, the universal charity and brotherhood quack is more to be deprecated than the puritan: he is more dangerous to the young, and infinitely more dishonest. When a man with glistening eyes, thick lids, moist lips, and a smooth soft smile, talks to me of charity and the supreme need of love,—when he forgives every sin against purity, but is inexorable towards the follies of asceticism,—when he accounts a lie less noxious than severity, and holds chastity as lowest in the scale of human virtues,—when such a man sets universal tolerance over all other moral qualities, and speaks with oily charity of the fleshly frail, I count him a quack; one of the very hierarchs of quacks; and bid him go squatter among the gulls in the reedy marsh; he has no business here, out on the wide pure ocean. When another, keen-eyed, thin-lipped, spare of flesh and bloodless, vaunts purity as the sole essential and justice as the sole judgment,—has no helping hand for the fallen, no word of pity for the penitent, no shout of encouragement for the failing,—when such a man, who never felt his pulses throb with quicker beat, or knew the headlong force of passion,

sits, cold and dry, measuring out the iniquities of the frail, I bid him too begone like a ghost from out the happy sunshine; let him cower back to the shadowy spectre-world which brought him forth, and not judge here of sins of which he never compassed the temptation, or mete out penalties for those imperious desires of which he never felt the most transitory need. And the man whose thoughts are crystal—clear, without shadow or reflection, whose will is like a single bar of iron—single and of iron—who has no balancing of equal parts, who looks never behind and never to either side, when he would ride down the timid and hesitating—those with tremulous consciences fearing to do ill—those with loving hearts wistful to harbour all—those with eager hands willing to bear many burdens, and grieving to be obliged to drop one,—when he denies the many-sidedness of life, and insists on the one straight course always and without turning,—I send him too away to his home of stalactite cave and granite rock; he is a quack, like the rest, and no teacher of living truth. Because the black pine throws a single shadow, straight and sharp, upon the snow, must the aspen be forbidden to flicker golden light upon the grass and flowers? Home, too, is great,—a holy sacred sanctuary; but the home-life is not all. A man may be a faithful husband and a vigilant father, yet unworthy, unblessed, and un blessing. And, in like manner, a man may love another than his wife and leave his children to the guidance of chance and nature, yet be no outcast from the wide Temple-court—no Judas to the highest good. Wholeness of domestic life counts for much; but there are other virtues by the side of this—some of the more virile, some of the more tender, kind; and it is not meet that a man's whole soul be bounded by the golden fence of his wife's wedding-ring. Yet there is one kind of quack who would make this the outside limit of morality, and who counts of no value the rich lands lying beyond the quiet home-paling, though some of those lands pay tithe to patriotism, and some to truthful science, and some to manly daring, and some to noble working for humanity and posterity. Quacks! quacks! all of them! Let them go, and give place to men with wider brows and squarer heads, preachers of a fuller, juster, more comprehensive faith than theirs!

Then there is the quack literary, whose vessel is empty for its own part, but who borrows the wine of another man's vintage, which he filters through it, drop by drop, till it gains a kind of second-hand flavour of the grape which imposes on the uninitiated; who knows absolutely nothing by original education, and must read up for every paltry article as it is ordered; who talks of his hard work, and bemoans himself as a slave of the press, if he gives a couple of days to clothing with his own words another man's researches, and the facts which have taken years to collect and collate; who steals thoughts as audaciously as a jackdaw steals spoons, and never knew what it was to do a day's independent digging in the literary mines; who is perpetually trying to make bricks without straw and to weave cloth without thread; who writes for just

so much the line, without having any thing to say, and carries his brains to market as a farmer's wife carries her eggs ; he, too, swaggers noisily through his class-room, and chalks up the apotheosis of quackery on the black-board above his head ; he, too, lives on shams and lies, and deals in paste and gamboge in lieu of the healing condiments of nature. Not infrequently the quack literary is seen in high places ; for he has the climbing faculty of the ape, and can gather himself into a smaller space than a full-grown man. As a rule, he is amusing, and can buzz pleasantly on a summer's evening to a great man's ear ; for he has cultivated the art of story-telling, has a trifle of accomplishments, and, if he worked half as hard for his salvation as he does for a dinner-table reputation, the world would see a saint in human flesh, and heaven be the richer for one more sinless soul. The quack literary is a good listener, and great in the power of adaptation. He can take a subject out of your own mouth, adopt the information you yourself have given him not a moment before, put it into new shape, dress it in new clothes, and dandle it before your eyes so deftly transformed that you do not know your own again, and break out into peans on his exceeding ability and the soundness of his views. Often have I marvelled at the ease with which men are caught by the novelty and beauty of their own reflection, with the tags and ribbons changed, and how little intellectual capital beyond quickness and assurance it needs to set a man up in full swing as a literary quack. But it is as a critic that he shines in the brightest splendour of his phosphorescent light. Seated on the throne of judgment, and with his inky thunderbolt in his hand, he is the Jupiter Tonans of his order. What matters it to him that the writer has for years toiled with good, hard, honest, unsparing work to perfect that book of his ? What matters it if every part has been well verified, every assertion dug up from its roots ? A dash of the pen, a flourish of the inky thunderbolt, and the author lies at the foot of the throne, smirched and scorched. The world which reads does not know that the writer of that hostile review calculated his work by its money-worth only, that he knew nothing whatever of the subject but what he found in the book itself, and that his sole object was to write a telling article which should insure his reëmployment. The world which reads knows only that such and such a master-journal attacked such and such a work ; and men are notoriously sheep-like, and glad to follow their bolder neighbour's lead. It is the collective We that kills ; the accumulated doses of arsenic, any one of which singly would have been innocuous, but which in a mass make the throat burn, and the heart heave, and dry up the life with a grievous pain. Eaves-dropper, literary pick-pocket, keeper of marine stores and dealer in stolen goods—and this is the accepted modern representative of that power which is the Fourth Estate of the realm, and which has taken the place of the priest and prophet of simpler ages ! Out with him ! dig his grave deep, and dig it quickly ! bury him beneath carrion and weeds ! for his is no life for the free, upper air, no light by which the world should walk.

His friend and cousin is the quack educational, of whom there are many varieties. There is, first, the man who undertakes to teach you a foreign language in six lessons, who has always a royal road to learning on his estate, where Parnassus is a mole-hill which a child may jump over, or a bowling-green set round with lamps ready lighted to show you the way to the arbour at the upper end. Then there is the phrenological and moral suasion quack, who would do all by appealing to what he calls the coronal region; who reads Solomon's rough-handed advice as a nineteenth-century exhortation for such tender dealing as mothers' hearts delight in, and speaks loftily of the degraded honour of a whipped boy of seven; who constructs a system of education out of the depths of his inner consciousness, and never pauses to inquire if it suits with the nature and requirements of youth or no. And there is the quack on the muscular Christianity basis, who travesties a noble truth and makes ridiculous what was originally sublime; who gives to schoolboy games a religious significance, and makes the playground of more importance than the class-room or the study; whose end and aim of masculine education is a manly bearing at football, and who ranks a good batter or a swift stroke before a Smith's prizeman or a double first; who places animal force higher than brain power, and makes muscle of more account than mind. And there is the home-education quack, who talks sweetly of maternal influence and feelingly of school-temptations, and would not have the young spirit sullied by the vices of the world, and holds to the maiden purity of the heart before every other quality or circumstance of boyhood, flattering the mother's vanity, and feeding her weakness, by assuming that no other mother's son is pure or noble enough to associate with hers, and that a special setting was designed by Providence for that jewel on her breast; and this is the quack who gains most with women. And there is the quack of a graver sort, who is strict in the matter of church-attendance and lax in the matter of the filthy rags of righteousness, who educates by the hymn-book or the rubric according to the platform whereon he stands, and who mulcts his scholars for missionary subscriptions or church-decorations, according to the height of the spire which over-shadows his pew. And then there is the Spartan quack, who uses the rod where another would use a kind word, and who flogs a boy to death while beseeching God to witness how much he loves him. But this kind is not so common as the rest. He goes down only with guardians and fiery fathers with strong ideas of discipline, and is much reprobated by women, and by men with womanly natures. It is only when he can graft his Spartanism on to some sectarian tree, and show that it is the result of an advanced spiritual life, that he and his system are likely to flourish. We all know of an instance quite lately, when such a quack kissed and cried and prayed and flogged in rapid alternation: and then laid out a murdered boy as the practical result of his ideas of discipline. Of all quacks the quack educational is the most dangerous and noxious; but he and the quack religious get large patronage from women, to whom

God and nature denied, doubtless for good purposes, all critical faculty when men appeal to their sympathies, or touch on the question of souls and offspring.

As for the quack political, is there one of the trade not of the brotherhood? From the diplomatist who juggles with a people's liberties, and amuses the nations by his clever thimblerrigging, to the small spouter at a public meeting, is there one in ten with an honest mind, clean-swept and free of quackery? I think not. The quack political generally understands to a nicety the texture of the feathers with which it is desirable that he construct his private nest. He knows whereabouts they lie among the ripe corn, and follows eagerly the larger birds which wear them in their crests and tails. Sometimes he is daring, and makes a dash at that stately egret floating white and high above him; sometimes he plucks the long pendants trailing through the yard, battling for his possessions with all the barn-door rabble; and sometimes he only lurks about the gilded cages, biding his time, and waiting on the generous offices of chance and riches dropped through the bars. But always and ever the main object of his life, the fixed desire of his soul, is—feathers. Here and there indeed, but rare as tropical birds in northern steppes, may be found one with only the naked bough for his home, roofed-in by leaves of oak and laurel. He has done his day's work without a thought of feathers. He has battled his bravest and flown at his highest, not for a sumptuous place of rest as his reward, but for the eternal good of the world,—to strike down tyranny in high places, to confront the level greediness of the lower herd, to break the bars of the gilded cages and force on the sleepy prisoners of wealth a life of lofty daring and noble deeds. But he is not of the quack tribe at all; and to him therefore we would offer our loving reverence wherever he may be found, whether by the shores of the blue Mediterranean, or in the smoke of our own manufacturing towns, holding him sacredly apart from the mummers who lie in painted masks beneath the fruit-trees, telling golden grapes for beads, while honest men stand empty-handed on the bleak common without.

Every quack political has his specific,—always a mere matter of machinery, which is to hoist society on new wheels, self-acting and needing no repair. Sometimes it is the shape of the voting booth, sometimes it is the lock of a criminal prison, sometimes it is the flourishes on law-papers, or the length of rope round a spendthrift's neck, or the pattern of an altar-cloth, or the handle of the trowel which is to plaster up the cracks in the parish-church, or the binding of the national school-books, or the price to be paid for our morning paper, or the exact line of hedge and road which entitles a man to be housed and fed, or the label on that extra piece of money to be spent by the executive: always some bit of outside tinkering, which is to set the creaking old mill to rights—a single specific, which is to cure all the clashing diseases of humanity. It is so easy to deal with man in the abstract! so easy to stitch up moral slops, which are to fit every one alike, when one is not pledged to the trying-on!

Grave or sleek, oily or austere, smilingly confident of heaven or grimly familiar with hell, pestilent under any form, and to be especially avoided, is the quack religious, who teaches that God saves by sects and according to the passwords of a congregation, and that salvation is to be reached only through the gate whereof he takes the toll. The intellectual reception of certain dogmas, and not honest, hearty deed, is the touchstone of spiritual worthiness with the quack religious; who finds it a profitable doctrine to exalt faith above works,—people preferring to feel that they are safe without the trouble of striving, and that, whether they grow thorns and nettles, or food for the hungry children, they are equally sure of good garnering in the end, and of a place with the richer harvest. There is a lazy humility in the idea, which the quack religious fosters: not always to his worldly damage. Nothing can exceed the confidence of this man's teaching, if it be not the credulity of his hearers. He has a kind of right-handed fellowship with heaven, and is never at a loss for private information on all points connected with grace and the soul. To hear him, one would think him a second Mahomet who takes special journeys on an Al Borak of his own pasturing, always returning with a new Sura, which he writes up as his commentary against the Decalogue over the altar. Sometimes the quack religious is a handsome man, of full fleshly instincts, with a fine flavour of worldliness and carnal intellect about him which gives a piquancy to the more solid matter, and pleasantly mingles earthly graces with spiritual gifts. When he is of this kind he is essentially the popular preacher, equally at home in the pulpit and the drawing-room, with a decided leaning towards high life and popular science, speaking of the opera and the sacraments in a breath, tolerant of infidelity in white vests, but inexorable towards dissent with linen not always inoffensive. He is the modern representation of the Abbé of the Regency, somewhat more moral, but not a whit less seductive.

Sometimes he is of the apostolic school, mild, saintly, spiritualised, noted for lavender kid gloves and a spotless laundry, careful in the matter of clerical costume, and with the peculiarity of being always well in view when piously engaged. This is a younger character, with a position to make: and expectations. This is the man for whom young ladies pine in hopeless love, who rules triumphant over the hearts of schoolmistresses and governesses, poor companions, faded maidens, and the whole class of neglected spinsterhood; who is called "sweet," and mostly likened to St. John or the angel Gabriel; who has a consumptive cough, and is much petted and maternally treated by his female disciples in consequence; who has countless slippers and book-markers and embroidered braces and antimacassars sent to him "with compliments;" and who, when he leaves his curacy at the end of his two years' ministration, receives a purse from the ladies of his congregation, filled with broken hearts in the form of guineas. This is not so dangerous a quack as that other; for the most part he is simply despicable, like any other fop. Less frequently than

either of these, the quack religious is sometimes an unpersonable man, fanatical and vituperative, who dips his blessing-brush in sulphur instead of holy-water, and rules the consciences of his people by terror instead of love. And very often he is a greasy saint, with a keen eye for pretty women, and not at all indifferent to carnal appetites. He is, then, of the "shepherd" class, and flourishes best in shady places, blossoming out into full daylight on a tub, where he preaches a compound of cant and blasphemy curiously combined. With such a man I should be careful of my silver and my maids, and should never be surprised if he turned up on a crank, edifying his fellows in a model prison. Honester men have been found there.

Other quacks there are, thick as gnats on a summer's day, shadows of all that is bright in man, distorted images of a beautiful original. But it would be too long to catalogue them, unless I named every faculty and profession extant. For they creep in every where, as night flows in to every corner of the daylight. Under the banner of the patriot, serving at the altar and standing by the steps of the throne, in the professor's chair and by the bedside of the sick, grinding colours for the painter, nibbing pens for the writer, freighting vessels by contract, and measuring out silks at a sacrifice, at the head of armies, and in the class-list of a dame's school,—every where and always they are to be found, generally in green and flourishing condition, sadly discouraging to poor honesty begging wayside pence. When we shall have buried quackery, we shall have filled up the deepest slough which lies between us and good,—we shall have cleansed our cornfields of their rankest weeds, and cleared our mines of their foulest gases. This will be the inauguration of that good time coming, which has never come yet, but which we all know is waiting for us round the corner of the present.

E. L.

In the Temple Gardens.

I.

THE Gardens of the Temple are hermit-nooks of quiet in a world of din,—as foreign to surrounding incidents as a clod of turf in a paved roadway, or a butterfly in a vault. The toil and clamour worry on outside, with the pitiless punctuality of machinery; still do the sheen little strongholds of calm retreat maintain their own undauntedly—the Piccioli of the huge prison, London. We prisoners should cherish worthily our prison-flowers.

It was some years back, and I occupied chambers on the third floor, No. 12 Brick Court. I was eating my way to the Bar. My friends called it studying law, and I did not contradict them; any how, I had many idle hours, and the small Garden of the Middle Temple was a favourite resort for the filling up of my time. It was quiet, sheltered, sunny; left almost entirely to a small band of habitual visitors,—elderly gentlemen, for the most part, not wealthy, but respectable, with little conversation amongst them, but a good deal of spelling over newspapers, taking of snuffs, blinkings at the river, and speculations about the weather. A few children came in the middle of the day, and gambolled about on the grass, but with a subdued air, as though not quite quit of the awe of the turbulent streets outside. It was seldom any strange face appeared in the Garden; so the frequenters got to be in a manner known to each other, and a sort of silent acquaintanceship existed among us. We sat in the sun, gazing out at the river, and overhead at the sky, taking dreamy notes of each other, making up little mental sums of our pleasure, and simmering drowsily in a sort of hushed happiness.

I imagine this mutual contemplation formed a chief entertainment. I know it was a pleasure to me to observe my associates, to scrutinise their actions, form conceptions of their characters, and construct imaginary histories of their lives. I diverted myself with a mental *fantoccini*—the figures actual and tangible enough, but the wires which moved them, the antics they were made to play, and the scenes in which they were called on to appear, altogether fictitious and fanciful. It is possible my associates were employed in a like occupation in regard to myself.

With one of the figures in my imaginary puppet-show, I had no little difficulty. I could never be satisfied that I had his jerk-strings in proper order—that I brought him on the stage at right times, or in fitting situations, or in a suitable line of parts. He was a little old man, so reposed, so motionless, I may almost say, in manner, that one caught at once at the idea that some spell of petrification had been cast over him, and the development of the witchery had perceptibly commenced. He was decidedly stony in face and figure. There was a singular absence of colour about him. He was very pale, with close-clipped hair of a dull

leaden gray. His head was bowed forward, his chin almost touching his chest. Yet he sat stiffly, if not uprightly, his clasped hands leaning on his stick. His eyes, always turned in the direction of the river, were like those of a blind man,—they were so dead from want of colour, and so little lit by speculation. Who was he? What, in his past life, had so bound him up and ossified him, as it were? Some curious history, I persuaded myself, must attach to him, and *that* I puzzled myself to imagine.

It was with something of amazement, then, that I one day beheld an approach to a smile flecking about the immobile face, just as the sun-rays, streaking through a tangle of tree-boughs, might light upon a weather-stained granite image and dapple it with radiance. I was quite at a loss to account for this, when I noticed that an addition had been made to the ordinary number of children converting the garden into a placid playground, in the person of a little girl, some six or seven years old, whom I did not recollect to have seen in the place before. The old man could not perceive her in the position he occupied, and it was some time before I detected any connection between the presence of the child and the change in his aspect. At length I distinctly recognised that, whenever the tiny voice of the little girl made itself heard above the voices of her playmates, the same smile of pleasure gleamed out on the stony face, and light glittered once more in the stony eyes; and this without his seeing her. He never once turned his head. He sat perfectly still, like one listening to exquisite music, the source of which he knows to be invisible, fearing to move, lest he should dissolve the spell; gradually, however, the children came down nearer to the river-wall, and at last in front of the seat occupied by the old man. It was curious to see how, by degrees, the knowledge of the child's presence dawned upon him; how his eyes settled upon her, mechanically and involuntarily at first, then with more and more earnestness, until at last they seemed, as it were, to drink in her image greedily; how he perceptibly thawed, and a benign tenderness came to redeem his face from its habitual blankness. But on her withdrawal from the garden, in about an hour, the retrogression was as complete as had been the progress; the smile flickered for a few moments, like the sinking flame of a candle, and then went out altogether; the same stony screen came and blocked out the light in his eyes; the features congealed again, and once more humanity froze into statuary.

On the following morning the child revisited the garden, and soon afterwards came constantly in the fine weather. Each time the favourable change came over the old man, and each time the bonds which encumbered him seemed to become more relaxed. His interest in passing events gradually grew and intensified. He now watched the little girl attentively, followed with his eyes her every movement, nodded when she chanced to look his way, and smiled upon her kindly. At one time he was getting up to dislodge with his stick her parti-coloured ball, caught in the boughs of a lilac-tree; now he was disentangling a gordian knot into which her skipping-rope had gathered; and now smoothing the ruffled

plumage of a dislocated shuttlecock, which refused to spin in the air in a well-disciplined manner. He was ever busying himself in some kindness to the child; ever repaying himself for his trouble by earnest contemplation of the little creature, so rapid in her movements, with a quaint half-petulance, half-fun about her, and an elfin grace altogether indescribable.

"And what is your name, little one?" he said to her one day, patting her head, radiant with silky, blond curls.

"I'm Lily."

The old man started a little, and his hand fell down to his side.

"Lily? That's short for Lilian."

"No, no, no, I tell you. I'm Lily, Lily, Lily."

Such a curious little frown dimpling the exquisitely fair forehead; such a quick stamp of the tiny foot.

"Well, Lily be it then," he said, smiling, with something sad in the smile. "And what are you so busy about?"

"This is a daisy-chain. Isn't it a long one? Nurse made half of it, you know; but I made the other half all by myself. I did. See! oh, its ever so long. Take hold of this end; now see me run away, a long, long way off, with the other." Dancing away, she retreated some yards, then suddenly, with a bright, silvery, shrilly laugh, she commenced to run round the old man, winding him in the daisy-chain. The closer she came to him, the more she laughed. He was pretty well swathed in it, when the chain broke. "Oh, what a pity! You do look so nice! so nice! why, you're all daisies. I shall call you 'Old Daisy.' I'm Lily, and you're Daisy. May I call you 'Old Daisy'? May I?"

And so they would go on all the day, and it was hard to say which was the more pleased of the two. Each morning, a repetition of the play with little Lily would ensue. She came up always to say "Good morning," rather embarrassed by the performance of that social etiquette, after which she forgot all shyness, and was soon deep in the most wonderful games: now going through military evolutions, with Old Daisy's walking-stick for her musket, and marching sturdily to the music of her own bright little voice; now preparing to shoot Old Daisy with great pomp and circumstance. "Present, fire, bang!"—at the last of which terrible words, Old Daisy was to recline back in his seat, as though mortally wounded, while a peal of fairy laughter rewarded that splendid histrionic performance. Now she had captured the old man's hat, and having first used it as a drum, was now decorating it with sun-flowers, the gift of the gardener; now his old red handkerchief with white spots was waving about flagwise on the end of a stick. Little Lily had an endless budget of amusements.

"How old are you? I'm six. Are you ten, twenty, a hundred, five hundred, a thousand, a million? There's another steamer. Why do you take snuff? nurse says it's nasty; is it nasty?—is it? is it? Oh, I say, look there,—that little girl's got a hoop. O Daisy, dear, tell me all about Aladdin once more—no, not Aladdin, Jack and the Beanstalk.

Oh, I should so like to see a giant. Shall I ever be a giant? Are you a giant? Have you got a magic ring? Tell me, do—do, there's a dear Old Daisy!"

It was not possible to remain long a tacit spectator of little Lily's pranks; it was not possible to escape falling under her influence. Soon I too became enmeshed; I too was compelled to become a participant in her sports. I had to do this, and say that, and hold the other. I had to rub up my knowledge of nursery-fiction, and succeeded in passing a very fair examination in Blue Beard, and obtaining a double first for my perfect acquaintance with Cinderella. And Lily was a relentless examiner. Day by day she iterated her questionings, scorning all variorum editions, permitting no additions to or excisions from the fable to be narrated, but insisting always upon the entirely *pure et simple* version. And so, with the link of Lily drawing us together, Old Daisy and I began an acquaintance, rather calm and formal, not to say forced, in the first instance, but afterwards proceeding with greater cordiality. And after Lily had finished her morning's gambol and quitted the Gardens for the day, the old man and myself drifted into conversation, always commencing with Lily for our subject,—and we each had a good deal to say about her,—and afterwards branching off to other and more general topics.

II.

One day, and little Lily did not come into the Gardens. The next day, and the next, and the next came and went, and still no Lily. The Gardens were bereft of their charm. My mornings seemed to have lost their occupation. Old Daisy grew uneasy and restless. Had he not been effectually roused by his active friendship for the child, he would have been fast sinking into stone again. What could have become of our little friend? It was necessary to institute inquiries. Lily's playmates, and the nurses who accompanied the children in their visits to the Gardens, were interrogated. The sad truth was at length disclosed. Lily was sick. The poor little soul had been struck down by scarlet fever, and was deeply suffering; pain was racking those tiny limbs, and the shadow of death was clouding the couch of our fairy playfellow.

It was grievous to see how this news affected Old Daisy. He was speechless for some minutes, swaying himself about from side to side as he sat, evidently in an agony of sorrow. His trembling hands with difficulty produced his red handkerchief, and at last, overcome with grief, he hid his face in it and wept outright.

"I knew it, I knew it," he said, rocking himself about. "My poor little Lily!"

It was some time before he calmed. Meanwhile he spoke in the wildest way of his regret. The excess of his emotion seemed scarcely intelligible, had I not perceived that he had coupled with his sorrow for poor Lily the remembrance of some very painful occurrence in his past

life. It was difficult, however, to get nearer to this than the most vague surmise.

"Would you be happy?" he asked suddenly, and almost fiercely; "then rest no hope upon another. Be friendless and alone, rather than dependent for your joy. Lean, and you fall. Build upon others, and you go down like a house reared on the sand. This has been mine—not once, no, nor twice."

These words were utterly unaccountable at the time, though I understood their meaning afterwards.

"My poor Lily! Must you too fade away and die, like that other Lily? I sow love and reap death, or worse than death, sorrow that never dies."

I stayed with him so long as he remained in the Gardens. I offered to accompany him to his dwelling, wherever that might be. But he declined all assistance, promising, however, in compliance with my earnest entreaty, that he would meet me in the Gardens, at the accustomed hour on the following day.

In his absence I instituted further inquiries with regard to Lily. All I could learn bore fully out the sad intelligence of the morning. Lily was dangerously ill with scarlet fever. Her symptoms were alarming, and it was feared that her delicate constitution would yield to the malignant attack of the disease.

The next morning I met Old Daisy in the Gardens. He seemed to have recovered in a measure from the first paroxysm of his sorrow. But he was strangely altered. His agitation was extreme; he walked very infirmly, and was much broken altogether. He had lost his old rigidity; was full of restlessness and motion; was no longer reticent and self-contained; but excited, talkative, even garrulous. He drew from me all the information I had been able to elicit as to the state of poor little Lily, and discussed the matter with the most painful excitement. His grief had not diminished, but affected him differently. He was no longer violent in his emotions, and bitter in his regrets and reproaches. He was weaker, more shattered and trembling, and appeared to have no longer the strength to demonstrate his feelings so forcibly. He spoke much of himself and of his past life—not so much in the form of a coherent narrative as in broken sentences scattered here and there about the conversation, and which it took some time afterwards to gather and connect; and these were said less to put me in possession of facts of his career, than as unconsciously dropped in a talkative mood to indulge to the furthest the form of outspeaking which his sorrow had assumed. I have endeavoured thus to construct a theory as to the history of the old man, in which I have adhered as closely as possible to the scraps of evidence I had obtained, preferring to leave lapses in the chain rather than supply links of supposition or invention.

His name, it appears, was James Blackburn. He had been connected with an old Liverpool firm, "Mossup and Blackburn," cotton-merchants.

There had been no Mossup in the firm for centuries ; it had been the entire property of the Blackburn family. He was born and bred at Liverpool, and at the age of fifteen had stepped from school into the counting-house, as his father and grandfather had done before him. He had led a life of hard and monotonous working. The creed of the family seemed to be confined to the "house." No toil was too great, no sacrifice too heavy, no consideration was worth a feather's weight when the good of the "house" was concerned.

Old Daisy, for so I prefer to call him, had far advanced in middle age, cramping down his life according to the prescriptions of the family. For many years he had done his duty strictly. Then some strange spell fell upon him. He made a discovery which his predecessors had entirely failed to make on their own accounts. He had a heart—he was in love. They had, it is true, married, for the "house" required that sons and successors should be bequeathed to it for its maintenance, and each head of the "house" had therefore taken a wife into his tepid bosom, and made a creditable husband, so far as the punctual performance of the shows of marital duty was concerned. Love was too unbusiness-like to be much regarded ; and sentiment was altogether out of the question. But a wealthy marriage was, now and then, a useful thing, inasmuch as it extended the connections of the "house," and furnished it with facilities for furthering its operations. With Daisy it had been different. Love had been to him a discovery—a something standing, as it were, above and apart from every thing else—a new faith ; and he flung himself into it with all the energy of a proselyte. A singer, an artist, a woman whose only dower was her beauty and her talents, had crossed his path, and he became a changed man. He must have been a strange, uncouth, ignorant suitor : he had gone through no "primers" of love-making ; no juvenile wooings afforded him precedents how to act in the grand passion of his life. But his great truth carried him triumphantly through. There could be no mistake about the earnestness of the feeling which rocked and rent and governed the cotton merchant. His suit was accepted. Perhaps the object of his passion had caught something of its force—all great passions are contagious. Perhaps the woman, in a measure exiled from society by the necessities of her artist life, caught greedily at an offer which, while it assured her of affectionate treatment, gave her also position and affluence. Certainly she had never been loved so much. Courted, flattered, idolised, she had been ; but not loved with a love like this. So she gave her hand to the cotton-merchant.

The "house" was egregiously scandalised. So bad a debt as a profitless marriage had never before been incurred ; and this marriage was a positive loss ; a derogation ; a taking-down of a whole story of the House. A woman without money, without connections ; a singer, who had been gaining a living by singing in public, and by giving lessons in private ! It was disgraceful ; it was monstrous ; it was not respectable. The most sinister predictions were uttered. The bald heads of the clerks

in the counting-house swayed to and fro emotionally, like golden pippins floating in a troubled water-butt. Daisy had raised a storm he could not quell. He had mined the respectability of the House.

But the strangest thing was, that the House never *did* recover from the blow it had received. Perhaps it had been so long out of the way of struggling, that at the first touch it went down. Certainly difficulties beset the House from that unlucky hour when Daisy forgot to be business-like, and surrendered himself to Love—flung away his ledger, and married a singer. Not that the lady in any way, by any act of hers, brought mischief on the House. She met her husband's ardent passion with an affection which was certainly tender and true, if it did not quite match his fervour. No one word against her married life was ever uttered; and when, six years after their marriage, she died in giving birth to an heir to the House, there was great and true regret exhibited on the occasion—quite as much as there was good crape, which was saying a good deal. For Old Daisy, the agony of his grief was pitiable in the extreme. He had succumbed wholly but for the child his dying wife had bequeathed to him.

A series of losses, and the House slipped out of its first place in men's estimation. A panic in the cotton-market, the failure of large American houses, the high price of money, the necessity of realising at a sacrifice—epidemical returns of these misfortunes seriously debilitated the House. Its acceptances were less highly thought of; confidence in it was gradually dwindling. Every body said it was not by any means the House it once was. Still, years went on, and it was still existing, though palpably decaying; and Daisy, little recking the steady advance of the dry-rot in his business, was absorbed in his only son growing up a very promising heir to a House that was now ceasing to want one at all.

III.

I will continue, as nearly as possible, in Daisy's own words.

"It would be difficult to explain to you how earnest, how all-absorbing, was my affection for my son.

"In due course came a reflex of my conduct. Years before, I had embittered the feelings of others by my love and marriage. My son followed in my footsteps. He loved. I refused to sanction his union, only in course of time to withdraw that refusal, to murmur a blessing over joined hands, and bid God-speed to a young couple setting off on a honeymoon journey.

"Perhaps we can never see with our children's eyes—can never love their loves; certainly between my son's wife and me there seemed to be a grief which we could never conjure up affection enough to bridge. She always hated me, I know. She was well aware I had opposed her union with my son. She had triumphed, but she had not forgiven. She suspected me. She was angry at my son's affection for me. I could read this plainly in her pale haughty face, and her large pitiless eyes. How

could I love her? Had she not taken my son from me? had she not interrupted his affection for me? Did she not seek to engross him, to prevent one grain of his love straying away from her to me? We were thus in perpetual opposition—not openly avowed, not expressed in words; but known and acknowledged between us none the less. We were jealous of each other.

"A child was born of this union: a lovely little girl, whom they christened Lillian. About this time the House became seriously embarrassed. There had been some alarming stoppages on the other side of the Atlantic. The failure of an American house, with which we had had large dealings, rendered it necessary that we should send over to New York a confidential person to investigate the state of affairs, and assert our claims upon the estate. My son volunteered to go. The case was so urgent, that I could not but rejoice at his proposal, though deeply pained at the necessity of his quitting England, even for a three months' absence. I sanctioned his going. This drew upon me the violent opposition of his wife; she expressed herself in most extreme terms. For the first time angry words passed between us; my son interfered, and asserted his authority. He was determined on the journey; he would not permit that I should be addressed as I had been. A seeming reconciliation took place; and we were united in sorrowfully bidding adieu to my son, in our earnest love for him, but in nothing else. He sailed from Liverpool, in the *Atlas*, never to return. You may remember the story of that unhappy ship. From the date of her quitting the Mersey she was never heard of again. She never reached the opposite side. An awful mystery surrounded her fate—not a spar, not a trace of her was ever discovered. It was conjectured, and probably with correctness, that she had foundered in a sudden storm, and every soul on board lost.

"How we waited and waited for tidings of my son! How we hoped and prayed for his safety! how we watched the ship-news in the papers, and made inquiry after inquiry at the agents! It was long, very long, before we could believe what others had been for some time confident of. We heard that the underwriters had been asking fifty, sixty, eighty per cent for further insurance of the *Atlas*; then had declined all dealings about her; lastly, that the ship had been accounted at Lloyd's as lost, and that her insurance had been paid. Still we fought against the belief that death had claimed our dear one. We hoped and prayed, and loved on, till gradually came the dusk of fearful doubt, and at last the night of dreadful certainty. We spoke few words—with a dumb, stupefied agony we admitted the conviction into our hearts. We knew that he was dead: a terrible grief oppressed us; his wife put on widows' mourning.

"Yet was she nothing softened by her sorrow. Her hate for me seemed even intensified. She regarded me as in a great measure the cause of her bereavement; but for me, she did not hesitate to assert, my son had never left her. That her love for him was intense I never doubted, any more than that her sorrow at his loss was earnest. But it was a fierce,

hard, grasping love, as it was an acrid, angry, cruel sorrow ; and day by day she glared at me with her large, cold, unforgiving eyes, glances that revealed to the full her rage and her hate.

“ And now occurred the stoppage of the House. The catastrophe, for some time impending, came at last. I had hoped that some terms might have been arranged, and the business resumed. But, on examination, it was found that the liabilities of the House were far greater than had been anticipated, and that the ruin was irretrievable and final. I surrendered every thing to the creditors. In consideration of the respectability of the House, and the uniform integrity of its conduct through a long course of trying circumstances, the creditors had the generosity to allow me an annuity out of the assets ; small, but amply sufficient for my wants, and which relieved me from the painful necessity at my time of life of recommencing to work for a livelihood. My ruin involved also my son’s widow. The whole of her property had been sunk in the House. It was with no softened feeling towards me that she accepted my proposal that she should share my small income granted me by my creditors.

“ We left Liverpool, and took a small house in a suburban district north-west of London. It was no happy household I hoped to raise round me. I knew that no one tie of affection could ever exist between that strange hard woman and myself ; yet I did look for happiness in the love of my little grandchild. The love I had had for my dead wife and my dead son, which had grown with my age and strengthened as I grew weaker, was now given wholly to my little Lilian, my own darling little grandchild. How winning she was in every way ! how exquisitely beautiful ! How full of all the wonderful witcheries of childhood I can best relate to you in saying that her resemblance with that poor little one who was here but a day ago, and is now, God help her, dying, was something singularly strange. She also was called Lilian. I have loved them both. Death has ever dogged the footsteps of my love.

“ One summer morning, ten years back, I was in the small garden attached to our house ; my little grandchild was at my side, every now and then making believe to garden with a small toy-spade. The child had an extreme fondness for me, and was always happy to be with me, laughing and prattling in her bright, merry way.

“ My son’s widow showed her white face at the garden-door. She was very worn and infirm from sorrow and ill-health, and walked with difficulty. Slowly, and leaning on a stick, she advanced a few paces into the garden. There was a red light in her large glaring eyes, which told me she was very angry.

“ ‘ Lilian ! ’ she cried, in a harsh grating voice.

“ The child, keenly sensitive, shrunk back, for the voice and glance alarmed her.

“ ‘ Lilian ! ’ she repeated passionately.

“ ‘ I’m frightened ; ’ the child clenched her hands round mine, the colour left her face, and tears started into her eyes.

"Reluctantly I told her to go to her mother, and not to fear. The child tremblingly went towards her. The mother, with an abrupt gesture, motioned her in-doors. The little one obeyed her. She came down to where I was standing.

"'You would steal away my child. You would rob me of her love.'

"The words were uttered with a hissing fierceness. I endeavoured to assure her that she had mistaken me. She stopped me with an angry wave of her hand.

"'I know it. I have watched you. Don't think to cheat me. You sought to turn *his* love against me. He is dead; is not that enough? Must his child be turned against me also? No, I say, no—no. She is all mine now.'

"She trembled from head to foot with rage.

"'She shall not quit my sight. She shall not leave my side. I forbid all attempts to take her from me. I forbid you seeking to draw her towards you. Her love shall be mine—all mine. You shall not touch her—you shall not speak to her—you shall not see her unless I choose. Do not dare to cross me in this.'

"The red light flashed fiercely in her eyes, and she raised her thin white hand and shook it menacingly as she spoke. Then slowly she moved back into the house. Poor woman! her jealous, angry, selfish love was preying on her mind.

"In a short time her weakness had increased to such an extent that she was compelled to keep her room. She could scarcely stand, and was only lifted from her bed to a couch, on which she reclined all day. A series of neuralgic pains seized her also, and deprived her of sleep to an alarming extent. She was very much wasted, and suffered terribly. But she did not relax her determination never to lose sight of little Lily, and to do all in her power to keep her away from me. The child was retained constantly at her bedside, and was not suffered to leave her room. The sick woman watched with hungry anxiety to see that no communication passed between the child and me. Poor little Lily! with what a frightened, puzzled air she regarded the strange situation in which she was placed! How longingly she looked for a renewal of our old games together! Yet she made no advance towards me. A knowledge that something was wrong, and that we were to be no longer together as of old, possessed and awed her. So she stayed in the sick-room, and paled from confinement and want of change, and looked very cowed and unhappy. The colour was quitting her lips and cheeks, and the light was dimming in her exquisite eyes, and she was losing her gay spirits, and sinking into a low, moped, wretched state, it made me angry and sick to see.

"The doctors attending the invalid had given her opiates. I took advantage of this. I entered her room. The patient was breathing heavily, in a sound, deep sleep. Little Lily was curled up at the foot of the bed, playing abstractedly with a headless doll. At my entrance she looked,

and a gleam of pleasure danced for a moment in her eyes, to be succeeded by a glance at the pale face of her mother, hardly less white than the pillow on which it rested. I beckoned to her. She quickly understood my meaning, rose, and, with a noiseless tread, followed me from the room. I determined to take advantage of the mother's drugged sleep, and give the poor child a change from the depressing monotony of the sick-room.

"We set out for a walk then, Lily gradually resuming her old sunny manner. Not far from the house were then open fields. I speak of some years back, remember. In a cutting through these ran the Birmingham Railway, and it was a great delight to the child to sit on the well-turfed slope of the cutting and watch the trains as they dashed past to and fro. To this spot, then, we once more directed our steps, took our seats, and commenced counting the lines of carriages which the shrieking engine whirled away from us. Lily was busy, too, making daisy-chains, and tying up bouquets of clover, and decking me with wild flowers.

"For a few minutes my thoughts wandered back into the past, to my counting-house life—to my deep love—to my dead wife—to my lost son. Then I thought of that angry sick woman, racked by her fierce jealous passions; and lastly of the poor child Lily, whom I was forbidden to love, who was forbidden to love me, and whose company I could only enjoy by stealth. I started from my reverie. I looked round for Lily. To my horror, I found that she had descended the incline, and, in her anxiety for daisies, had wandered on to the line of the railway, and was plucking them close to the very rails. I called to her in an agony. She looked up with a crow of delight, holding overhead a little bunch of daisies. Then—then—O God! came the hideous shriek—the whirling train grinding on its grim iron way! She saw her danger, gave a little scream of terror, and hurried back towards the slope. Too late! too late! The monstrous engine struck her cruelly. She was flung forward several yards on to the side of the cutting; a terrible wound was shining on her forehead, and the red blood clogging and soiling her golden hair.

"Half swooning with fright, I hurried towards her; a look of suffering and alarm was upon her face—with mouth half open, showing the tiny pearly teeth within, and eyes staring under raised and rigid brows. I felt for her heart's beating, but could detect no pulsation. Not a soul was near to proffer aid or counsel. The train had hurried by this time a mile away; my heart was throbbing with a violence that was exquisitely painful, my head burned, and strange shapes seemed to dance before my eyes. I *knew that she was dead*, yet I would not know it.

"I took her in my arms—heavy and motionless, with swinging limbs—God, how it sickened me to see her so!—and ran back all the way to my house. A superhuman strength seemed given me to accomplish this, or perhaps I should say rather the force of insanity assisted me, for at that moment I felt I was mad.

"She stood at the door-step—up and dressed, and leaning on her stick

—wan and pale, with dark circles round her great staring eyes, and the red light burning fiercely in them. She thrust forth her thin trembling hand as she saw me.

“Where is the child?” she said, her fingers clutching out claw-wise.

“Be calm; pray compose yourself,” I murmured, as well as I was able.

“Where is she?” she shrieked. “What has happened? Lily! Lily! Give her me.”

“Her glance fell upon the dead child in my arms. I covered over with my hand the poor head, lest she should see the red stains among the silky curls. She was too quick for me.

“Take away your hands. Lilian, my own—my own, own darling. Monster, you have murdered her! O God! see the blood upon his hands—he has killed her.”

“With the scream of one insane, she flung herself upon me and tore away the child. She hugged the body tight to her heart, and kissed the wounded head till her white face was blotched and stained with blood. Suddenly she swooned back and fell heavily on the floor, still clasping the dead child to her heart. She never spoke sensibly again. She lived through that night and the following day; but she died the next evening, with the child still in her arms. One grave contained them both, and I was left alone—how sad, God only knows.”

It was some days after, and I was in my accustomed seat in the Garden, when some one touched my arm. It was Old Daisy, very pale and broken.

“And Lily?” he asked.

His eyes wandered round as he spoke, and fell upon some of Lily’s children-playmates, dressed in deep mourning. He tottered back.

“Dead! dead!” he said. “Again and again.”

I besought him to take comfort; he stopped me with an abrupt gesture.

“You don’t know all,” he said. “What if I have killed her. In the house I occupy, the fever has been raging. Could I refuse to render what aid I could to the sick? I carried contagion about with me; yet, pity me—forgive me. I have taken that child and fondled her in my arms! Now, call me murderer, and let me go.”

He gazed at me steadily for a minute, then slowly sunk back into his old petrified manner.

“You know the old fellow that used to come here so often in the brown coat—took snuff—carried a walking-stick? You know him, sir?” It was the Temple gardener who was speaking. “Well, a curious thing, yesterday morning he seemed just the same as usual, sat at his old seat in his quiet way—nothing remarkable about him; but he left rather earlier, and had not got farther than Fleet Street before he fell down—dead, sir, stone dead. Wasn’t it curious?—The chrysanthemums come on finely, don’t they, sir?”

Three Times.

FIRST time I saw my Love, my eyes
 Were gladdened with a sweet surprise ;
 There woke a thought that never dies,
 That bright June morning.
 A vision, fairly clad in white,
 Dawned softly, freshly on my sight,
 And in her hand were roses bright,—
 June roses,—pure from speck or blight,
 My Love's adorning !

Last time I saw my Love, she lay
 All pale, all silent, cold as clay ;
 The light of life had died away ;
 Oh, sad and sweet last time !
 And still she wore a robe of white,
 And on her pillow, lightly prest,
 And in the hand that lay at rest,
 Solemnly, on her peaceful breast,
 Were roses,—buds not opened quite,—
 Gathered before their prime.
 A tender care had laid them there ;
 But my dead Love was far more fair.

Next time I see my Love, I know
 A glorious garment, white as snow,
 On which no stains of earth can show,—
 A garment meet for heaven,—
 Will robe the form I long to see :
 My angel-love, who waits for me,
 And holds a palm of victory
 For earth's white roses given.

A. DONALDSON.

TEMPLE BAR.

JUNE 1861.

The Seven Sons of Mammon.

A STORY.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. CÆSAR DONKIN.

AS a freeborn Englishman, of full age, unconvicted of any offence, and with means amply sufficient to defray any costs or charges, you might be desirous, I assume, to obtain board and lodging in a genteel family where, at a moderate outlay, all the comforts, luxuries, and refinements of life were offered. Turning over the supplement of a great daily journal, a well-worded advertisement informed you as to the place where that board and lodging with its concomitants might be obtained. Mrs. Cæsar Donkin was a lady of much experience in advertising, and was generally fortunate enough to secure a left-hand top-corner. To see herself there on a fine Monday morning in the boarding and lodging season was, next to affixing a receipt to a bill for a month's hospitality, her chief delight. To ladies and gentlemen seeking a truly English home her doors stood widely open. You were to apply, by letter only, post-paid, to Omicron, care of Mr. Tryfell, pastrycook, Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace, Ticonderago Square. The highest references were offered and required; and as regards the first, a letter to Omicron very speedily brought about an interview with Mrs. Cæsar Donkin, who referred you to the pastrycook, to several neighbouring tradesmen, to a beneficed clergyman of the Established Church residing in the immediate neighbourhood of the Giant's Causeway, Ireland, and to herself. To look at Mrs. Cæsar Donkin was generally found sufficient. You made up your mind and boarded, or didn't board, after five minutes' parley. As to your own references, a month's payment in advance was held by Mrs. Cæsar Donkin to be far more conclusive of a candidate's respectability than any number

of testimonials from peers of the realm, members of Parliament, or dignitaries of the Church. But there was a proviso, there was a saving clause,—there was one little requirement which the hostess of 15 Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace expected you to fulfil; and if you were unable to do so, a gentleman might just as well hope to occupy a front parlour furnished in Buckingham Palace, with partial board from the royal kitchen, and Phipps the Ineffable to officiate as a boy in buttons, as to become an inmate of Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's boarding-house. She received no gentleman under sixty years of age. Above that age, she gave ample scope and verge enough,—she would have welcomed Methusaleh with affable gladness,—but sixty was her minimum. Her rule was inflexible. The laws of the Medes and Persians might have been summed up in her advertisement. She never departed from its terms. Read it.

BOARD AND RESIDENCE.—In the immediate vicinity of Kensington Gardens, the Marble Arch, Madame Tussaud's Exhibition, and within an easy distance of Kensal-Green Cemetery, and other fashionable places of amusement, all the comforts of home and the luxuries of refined life are offered, by a lady moving in the first circles, to ladies and gentlemen of means and position. The highest references given and required. Address, by letter only, post-paid, to 'Omicron,' care of Mr. Tryfell, pastry-cook, Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace, Ticonderago Square. N.B. No gentleman under sixty need apply.

The sting of the announcement was in this caudal postscript. You might be as rich as Croesus, but unless you were sixty Mrs. Cæsar Donkin would have nothing to say to you. Once, and once only, she had relaxed her rule, and had consented to receive a battered East Indian reputed to be enormously rich, and who would only own to fifty-nine. Mr. Jaghire stayed many months. He went away one morning to Malvern to drink the waters. He didn't come back. After the lapse of about a year, he wrote to Mrs. Cæsar Donkin, professedly from some unpronounceable place in Hindostan, whither he had proceeded, he said, in the hope of repairing his fortune, which had been grievously injured by disastrous speculations in indigo. He entreated her to take the greatest care of a very old and ragged shawl dressing-gown, and of a hubblebubble pipe much damaged, which, with a file of the *Bengal Hurharu*, and a slack-baked looking cat called Ginger, were the only chattels he had left in Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace. The slack-baked cat he requested Mrs. Donkin to accept as a present. He talked of making her speedy remittances,—of sending her draughts at sight, jars of chutnee, kincobs, uncut gems, all the wealth of the Indies for aught that appeared,—but he regretted that at present, owing to "the infamous conduct of his agents," he was unable to send any thing. Stay: he sent his compliments, and had the honour to inform Mrs. Cæsar Donkin that he was forty-five next birthday.

The dismal falling-off of this depraved Anglo-Indian—it was years before the mutiny, but he *must* have been Nana Sahib in disguise—was a

heavy blow to Mrs. Cæsar Donkin; but the perfidy of Jaghire taught her wisdom, and thenceforth she took care that none of the male sex but sexagenarians entered her doors. When a gentleman called on Mrs. Donkin, she took stock of him narrowly. Five minutes' inspection generally sufficed to enable her to come to a decision. She could see through paint and padding and bracing-up and buckling-in. No form of wiggery was unfamiliar to her. She asked for no certificate of baptism. She said to herself, "This gentleman is either over or under sixty," and accepted or rejected him accordingly. After the Jaghire catastrophe she was never known to err. The loss she sustained was in some sense salutary to her; and all her sexagenarian guests declared that, since that "Indian fellow" went away, her monthly bills always contained items for which she had never thought of charging before. There was no disputing those bills; they were, like her laws, unalterable. If an old gentleman grumbled, Mrs. Cæsar Donkin curtsied, and requested him to provide himself with another domicile by that day month. In most cases, the old gentleman was senile enough to cry, and beg pardon, and was readmitted to the privilege of paying about three guineas a week for his board and lodging; but he never grumbled again.

Mrs. Cæsar Donkin had an enemy, Mrs. Grapplecheese, of Great Aboukir Street, a rival lodging-house keeper. Mrs. Grapplecheese used to call the establishment in Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace "the hospital," "the paralytic asylum," "the refuge for the destitute," "Crutchstick Castle," and the like opprobrious names. Mrs. Cæsar Donkin laughed her bitter laugh, and asked how it was that Mrs. Grapplecheese could only get commercial clerks, half-pay lieutenants, and decayed old maids as boarders; why she didn't pay the butcher, baker, candlestick-maker, and so forth; and what she had done with the money of that *poor deceived* Miss Gumm, whom she had taken into partnership, and with whom she had, after some six months, quarrelled, even to the unseemly extent of public litigation. In the Paddington County Court the cross actions of Grapplecheese *versus* Gumm (disputed right of property in a Pembroke table and a volume of Blair's Sermons), and Gumm *versus* Grapplecheese (money lent), are yet reckoned among the *causes célèbres* of the district. The quondam partners were very nearly going up to the Common Pleas, each with her several plaint of assault and battery. That Gumm had torn off Grapplecheese's false front, the milkman and the newspaper-boy could testify; but, then, were not 'Liza the housemaid, and Stampell the postman, ready to swear that Grapplecheese had knocked out one of Gumm's false teeth with her matronly and by no means feeble fist, in the very passage of the house in Great Aboukir Street. How Mrs. Cæsar Donkin gloated over the feuds of her foewomen! "I never go to law," she said, with a toss of her head. The legal gentlemen who fomented the quarrels between Gumm and Grapplecheese earnestly wished that she would. "I pay my bills," Mrs. Donkin proudly declared. It was certain that Mrs. Grapplecheese didn't; and when Miss Gumm's

money, which wasn't much, was spent, the firm oscillated for a considerable period between Great Aboukir Street and Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was, indeed, notoriously insolvent; and Mrs. G.'s only defence was, that if she paid nobody, nobody, on the other hand, paid her. "*My husband doesn't drink,*" Mrs. Donkin used to say. Mr. Grabblecheese, it is useless to conceal, did drink. He was a dissolute corn-chandler; that is to say, he professed to have once dealt in cereals on commission, but he had come to a very draffy and husky stage, and imbibed continuously. He was not unfrequently laid up in lavender, or in tobacco and malt-liquor rather, in Whitecross Street; and his periodical appearances before the Commissioner made much mirth among the tipstaves and the attorneys' clerks. "*The low wretches,*" Mrs. Cæsar Donkin used to say, with a supreme curl of her lip, when she alluded to the entire Grabblecheese interest and connection.

The male Donkin, her husband, was a musician. He was professional, and played every night during the season in the orchestra of the Surrey Theatre. In the summer months he went to the sea-side, or to some suburban music-hall; at all events, he was not visible from July to September. His instrument was the violin; he dressed in rusty black; his demeanour was placid, and his nose was red. If he did not drink, his next neighbour must decidedly have been an ardent votary of Bacchus, and he, Donkin, have caught the convivial infection. He never mingled with the domestic concerns of Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace. He came home very late, and breakfasted in the kitchen, and departed quietly and unostentatiously, as he came. The Grabblecheeses declared that the area-steps were his ordinary channel of ingress and egress. He was the meekest and mildest of fiddlers, and had a smooth, shining, old, bald head, which the boys in the Surrey gallery at Easter time, and on Boxing-night, used to find an irresistible target whereat to aim nutshells and orange-peel. He bore all with equanimity. He would have endured even a ginger-beer bottle, and smiled under concussion of the brain. "*Where's the use,*" he would say to his comrade who played the flageolet, when advised to resent scornful epithets of "*catgut,*" and when insultingly desired to strike up,—"*where's the use? I'm a disappointed man.*" The old-gentlemen boarders who by chance met him about Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace merely saw in him a shabby elderly man with a blue-bag. There might be boots in the bag, or law-papers, any thing. Few suspected the fiddle; and only from the occasional presence of a lump of rosin on the mantelpiece of Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's sanctum, and a stray strand of horsehair floating about, could you have inferred any thing as to the vocation of her husband.

The dinner-hour in Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace was seven o'clock, and at about thirty minutes before that hour, and on a fine evening in the latter part of May, Mrs. Cæsar Donkin sate in the sanctum before named busily occupied in arranging the dessert for the coming banquet. She always gave her guests dessert. It helped them on with their wine.

She liked them to dine late. They lunched at their clubs or abroad,—not but what she had a midday refecton of the genteel description,—and a late dinner made them less hungry than thirsty. She liked the old boys to be thirsty, and to have plenty of wine, and of the very best, from their own wine-merchants. Tithe and toll Mrs. Donkin might indeed have taken on the decanters of the ancient boarders, but she would have scorned to adulterate or to dilute their potations; nay, when their own stores were temporarily exhausted, she was glad to supply them with wines and liqueurs of the very best vintages, for which she did not forget to charge a handsome price. “No Cape sherry, no logwood port, no British brandy for me,” was Mrs. Cæsar Donkin’s maxim. She sent for the finest wines with which Mr. Harrison Parker, of Pall Mall, could furnish her, and was quite contented with a profit not exceeding seventy-five per cent.

“My gentlemen like port,” she said; “it warms the cockles of their old hearts. Once get ‘em over their wine, and they don’t want to go out, do they, Puffin?”

Words similar to these rose to Mrs. Cæsar Donkin’s lips on the very afternoon of which I am speaking. The young person addressed as Puffin meekly acquiesced, as it was her practice to acquiesce in every thing that every body said. Miss Puffin was an incarnate affirmative. It would be inappropriate to call her an animated one, for she was the stillest and quietest of womankind. There had never been any animation about her; it wasn’t in her.

Mrs. Donkin’s sanctum was a kind of polygonal excrescence which had been partly robbed from the kitchen-stairs, and partly from the back-parlour, and incommoded the entrance to both. There had, it is presumable, once been a window to it, which had been bricked up and papered over in the days of the window-tax; but a sunken tracery of its outline was still visible, throwing the impossible dragons and abnormal flower-baskets in the wall-paper violently out of perspective. To compensate its disappearance, a hole had been knocked in the ceiling, and a skylight fitted, through which slippery vantage-ground the ill-omened cat Ginger frequently looked down with baleful eyes on the confabulations of Mrs. Donkin and Miss Puffin. The mistress of the house had a strange leaning to this animal, sole relic of the faithless Jaghire; for the shawl dressing-gown, the hubblebubble, and the *Bengal Hurkaru*, had long since gone the way of all rubbish. Ginger was repulsive in aspect, profligate and felonious in disposition; yet still Mrs. Cæsar leaned towards him, sometimes with affection, sometimes with a hearth-broom. He was a cynical cat, and from long acquaintance with every missile that could be propelled against his ribs and head, had grown callous. When he was not on the skylight, he sat habitually among the fragments of bottle-glass in the roughcast on the wall of the back yard. Now and then he caught a sparrow whose senses had become stupefied by the London smoke, and had so become weak upon the wing, and then,

having eaten him, Ginger rejoiced over the wing in a manner horrible to behold.

The polygonal sanctum was full of cupboards with locks that would have defied Hobbs, to say nothing of the tampering of any evilly-disposed housemaid. It being May, and warm weather, the meagre little fireplace was garnished with a neatly-crumpled supplement of the *Times*, from which, however, the Bergen-op-Zoom advertisement had been carefully cut. Mrs. Donkin had an almost superstitious reverence for these aids to publicity, looking upon them as things that had cost money and brought money, and were not to be lightly cast away. She kept the scissored fragments in an old volume of *Elegant Extracts*, and designed to make an album of them some day.

On the mantelshelf reposed the male Donkin's lump of rosin, and a couple of pit-orders for the theatre, the which, judiciously distributed, were found to be very serviceable in inducing tradespeople of a gay turn of mind to send in articles of first-rate quality at reduced prices. The rosin was flanked on either side by two little weasened black profile portraits in the sticking-plaster style of art, one representing Mr. Cæsar Donkin in an enormous coat-collar and an aggressively protuberant shirt-frill, the other, Mrs. Cæsar Donkin in leg-of-mutton sleeves and a hat like a cart-wheel placed horizontally. The gum had long since become desiccated, and portions of the heads and busts of the personages represented curled away from the fly-blown Bristol board. Little triangles of glass stuck in the corners of the warped frames. The bronzing with which the high lights had been relieved had become discoloured, and dotted Mr. Donkin's whiskers and Mrs. Donkin's hat-ribbons with a tarnished fluff, giving them the appearance of rusted Ethiopians. A little inscription in pencil beneath each portrait told the spectator that they were executed on the Chain Pier, Brighton, in July 1829. Had there ever been a time, I wonder, when Mrs. Cæsar Donkin cared less about Mammon than about matrimony? Perhaps. On the wall fronting the fireplace there hung another little portrait, a worn-out, mangy miniature, the carnations all faded, and one eye smeared out, on a bulging scrap of ivory. It was the picture of an unhealthy, inane-looking child in a frock and frills,—a mournful little object, who seemed to be weakly lisping, "I always had the rickets, and died of water on the brain, if you please." Such, it may be, was the end of young Cæsar Donkin, if there ever had been a Cæsar Donkin who was young, and wore a frock and frills, and had his miniature taken.

The dessert on the table—it was one of the order called by upholsterers "occasional," and a French furniture dealer would decidedly have put it down as a *meuble d'occasion*—was not such a display as Mr. Duffield or Miss Mutrie would have longed to have painted. It was mainly of the dry and gritty description. There were some argillaceous-looking biscuits, several pippins, whose bruised countenances gave them the appearance of fighting pippins, and of having been in the Ring, and heavily grassed in

a contest with the Blustering Railer ; some apparently petrified plums ; a few dropsical oranges, suggesting boiled or blown-out integuments and woolly interiors ; a plateful of almonds and raisins, very dried-up and shrivelled ; and some squabby flattened figs. This, with a seed-cake, presenting a curious model of different geological strata, completed the dessert. There was seldom any need to renew it. The old gentlemen who dined at Mrs. Donkin's table were in general toothless ; and as for the ladies, they had more reasons for pleasing the landlady than the landlady had for pleasing them, and so Mrs. Donkin did not study them much. Now and then the old gentlemen were generous, and on birthdays and the like brought home choice pears and strawberries, nay grapes and pines even, from Covent Garden. Mrs. Donkin did not in the least object, and the improved dessert made a gala-day for herself, the ladies, and Puffin.

A word may be spared for a glance at the two ladies I have mentioned by name. With Mrs. Donkin's age I have nothing to do ; it would be ungallant to make inquiry into it ; but taking her appearance for all in all, it is much to be feared that if Mrs. Donkin had lived in the reign of Elizabeth or James I., she would have been summarily sent to the stake, or at least dragged through a series of horseponds as a witch. The very sight of her would have set Mr. Hopkins itching to tie her thumbs together, and her facial *ensemble* would have been irresistible to the Reverend Cotton Mather. We know how many perfectly innocent and virtuous, albeit hideous, old ladies were unjustly burnt alive in the days of witchcraft persecution ; and remembering this, the ill-favouredness of Mrs. Donkin's appearance should not have militated against the presumption that she was in all respects a most estimable personage. Granting that she wore on her head a faded silken mutch, or hood, or calash, or something very much resembling the head-gear of the ladies who met on the blasted heath what time Macbeth was made Thane of Cawdor ; granting that from beneath this headdress there hung elf locks of grizzled and dishevelled hair ; granting that Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's countenance was, in the way of wrinkles and crow's-feet, a chart of defiance to Mr. Wyld and all other eminent geographers ; granting that on her upper lip and dented chin some sparse and bristly hairs of undefinable hue asserted themselves ; granting that two discoloured fangs made an unpleasantly prominent appearance when she opened her withered lips ; granting that what little of her neck was visible presented a remarkable series of gnarled corrugations ; granting that her shoulders were very high, her back very round, and her hands long, lean, and garnished with orange-tawny nails that approached the form of claws ;—granting all these peculiarities, it would be manifestly unjust to attach the stigma of sorcery to a lady who doubtless possessed every quality of head and heart necessary to endear her to her own sex and to the community at large.

That implacable Mrs. Grabblecheese boldly insinuated and resolutely

maintained that Mrs. Cæsar Donkin never washed. Well, supposing that she never did? We can be virtuous without soap, I presume. Some of the holiest hermits of antiquity were quite unacquainted with the use of the flesh-brush and the foot-bath. If Mrs. Cæsar Donkin was averse from lavatory exertion, her boarders had never to complain of a deficiency of towels or brown Windsor. Every thing in her house, herself always excepted, was as clean as a new pin. The furniture and metal work were as bright as the sun, and she was one of the spots on it.

The captious complained of her attire; surely she had a right to wear what clothes she liked. Her garments were of silk, although they certainly had seen their best, and perhaps their worst, days; for, short of absolute tatters, they had reached the superlative degree of shabbiness. From Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's girdle there hung a bunch of keys, which gave her a pleasant *chatelaine* look, compounded of a cellaress in a nunnery and a female warder in the House of Correction. She wore, too, an apron, conjectured, from its colour and texture, to have belonged to Mr. Cæsar Donkin in his early days of snuff-taking, and to have served him as a pocket-handkerchief. When to this you add very roomy list slippers, and a very remarkable brooch set in silver, and the stone of which was very like a petrified whelk, Mrs. Cæsar Donkin stands, or rather sits, before you in that unadorned beauty which is said to be adorned the most.

Respecting her companion, Miss Puffin, there is no need to enter into such minuteness of detail. Every body felt and said that Puffin was nobody. Mrs. Cæsar Donkin told her so at least five hundred times a day, and the worthy body seemed perfectly contented to be regarded as a nullity. She was a very placable little woman, with hair that had seemingly been carefully boiled until all the colour had been expressed from it, and with a complexion that had also undergone an analogous process of stewing down. If Puffin never smiled, it may be for the reason that her teeth were uneven, or that she had nothing to laugh at. If she seldom looked you in the face, it was perhaps because her eyes were very weak, and the lids thereof given to inflammation. If her hands were so very thin and bluely transparent, incessant hard work may have been the cause; and if, to sum up her personality, her poor little *barège* frock was dismally frayed and faded, it may be accounted for by the fact that it was very nearly the only dress which Puffin had to wear.

Being Nobody did not prevent people occasionally asking, in a lazy kind of way, how she came to be nobody and nothing. A few surmises respecting her were hazarded, but they involved no interest, and were seldom carried out to investigation. Some said she had been a partner of Mrs. Cæsar Donkin, and had been cozened out of her share in the business; others that she had been a boarder with a small annuity which had ceased, and being destitute, was now dependent on Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's bounty, and did what household work she could to assist her, for her

keep. Then there was a party who said that she was a bankrupt day-school keeper hiding from her creditors. Another risked the conjecture that she was Mrs. Donkin's sister, niece, daughter even; but the most generally received opinion was, that Miss Puffin had been a domestic servant, elevated from the kitchen to the parlour, and admitted to the full confidence of the lady of the house, and intrusted with all her secrets, because "she knew something about her," and could do her an injury if she chose. Don't for one moment imagine that one ten-thousandth part of the charity which exists in London is to be found in the dinner and asylum announcements that appear every day in the newspapers. Puffin was about thirty years of age, and was, it need not be said, "a maiden all forlorn," at whom there is too much reason to fear that "the man all tattered and torn" of the nursery rhyme, albeit excited by the morn-crowing of an early village cock, and an offer from a "priest all shaven and shorn" to perform the marriage service gratuitously, would have turned up his nose.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SEXAGENARIANS.

THE preparation of a dessert is no such very momentous matter, particularly when there are no strawberries to pick, and no grapes to prune with silver scissors or dress with vine-leaves. Mrs. Caesar Donkin, however, considered the daily occasion as one of great importance, and, with the assistance of Puffin, went through it with a considerable amount of state and ceremony. The half-hour before dinner was her time for descanting on the virtues and the failings of her boarders, for comparing the experience of the past with the occurrences of the present, and for devising those crafty little additions to her monthly bills which redounded so greatly to the credit of her ingenuity, and were by no means unserviceable in swelling her monthly profits.

"But as for General Tibby, Puffin," Mrs. Caesar remarked, twisting a raisin which was obviously past service from its stalk, "he must go."

Puffin, who was polishing a pippin, did not verbally respond to this observation; but she gave utterance to a plaintive bleat, which may have been either a negative or an affirmative, or nothing at all, as the case stood.

"You mean that you think he ought to go," pursued Mrs. Donkin, quite satisfied as it seemed with the reply. "I can stand him and his carryings-on no longer. The nasty, mean, old hunks! I wish he'd never come here, that I'm sure I do."

This time Miss Puffin spake: "He's very old," she timidly ventured to remark.

"Old!" repeated the boarding-house keeper; "he's as old as the hills. He's one of the screws out of Noah's ark, and as rusty. What's the good of his being old and half silly, if he's got nothing besides his half-pay and an annuity, which dies with him?"

Miss Puffin winced at the mention of an annuity. It recalled, perhaps, unpleasant reminiscences.

"His half-pay," Mrs. Donkin continued, in a true philanthropic spirit, "he can't help. Not that he ever fought for it, I should imagine. He never went further than Wormwood Scrubbs, you may be sure. But it's his annuity that drives me wild with him. A man who would sink his savings in an annuity, and give up some comfortable thousands in a lump for a paltry six hundred a year, would poison his grandmother."

"Ah, that he would," acquiesced Miss Puffin, who would have agreed with Mrs. Donkin if she had accused General Tibby of a design to blow up the Houses of Parliament or set the Thames on fire.

"The man pays punctually enough," Mrs. Donkin was just enough to admit. "But where's the use of his money, if he's got nothing to leave? He might make his will on the back of a postage-stamp, and his handsomest legacy would be the silver buckle to his stock, his old wig, or his shower-bath. Stop; he's got a rouge-pot too, and a hare's-foot. I'm sick and tired of him, Puffin. He gives himself all the airs of a bashaw of three tails. He grumbles at every thing. He tastes the milk at breakfast before it goes into his tea, and talks of adulteration. He smells his bread, and says he's sure there are ground bones in it. He finds out my extras and scratches them out. He never offers any body a glass of wine, though he drinks shamefully; and, worse than all, he takes my gentlemen out at night, and keeps them till two o'clock in the morning at his nasty clubs, smoking and guzzling, I'll be bound. He's half-ruined that poor Mr. Fogo, who was never any thing more than a cotton-broker at Liverpool, but always wishes to pass himself off as a military man."

From the tenor of Mrs. Donkin's remarks it may be reasonably inferred that General Tibby was by no means a favourite with that lady. Previous to the discovery of the annuity, indeed, he had held a high place in her estimation. Although convicted of the heinous offence of having sunk his capital, he might have continued on the footing of an ordinary boarder; but his most unpardonable crime was the seduction into dissipated ways of the ex-cotton-broker Fogo, who was very wealthy and had not invested his property in an annuity.

"Give Tibby warning," was the sententious advice proffered by Miss Puffin when her companion had come to the end of her complaints.

"I must and will," replied Mrs. Cæsar, "though it's a hard matter to lose something very like two hundred a year. But I can't stand him, Puffin, and that's the truth. He ought to be charged a pound a week for his cough, and another pound for the stupid nonsense he talks, and thirty shillings for the trouble he gives the servants for his baths, and his I don't-know-whats, and then he ought to be hung for an old skin-flint."

"He's a wretch," Miss Puffin agreed, pensively musing over the plate of figs.

"Ah," retorted Mrs. Donkin, with some asperity, "it's all very well for you to call him a wretch; and yet I've heard you flattering the old nuisance up to his very eyes. You sha'n't sit next to him any more, Puffin."

"I won't," returned Miss P., with perfect equanimity.

"Why don't you try your sheep's eyes upon Mr. Chatwynd," Mrs. Donkin resumed, "or upon Mr. Maunder, or on Captain O'Ballygrumble, or on Mr. Tiddydoll, or on that dear, good, kind, old creature the Governor?"

It may have been intended as a compliment to speak of Miss Puffin's orbs of vision having any resemblance to sheep's eyes. It would have been nearer the mark to have likened them to those of a lamb sorely afflicted with ophthalmia. To the patient Puffin, however, all epithets were equally indifferent. She was the kind of woman whom you could have called a griffin or a hippopotamus without in the least disturbing her tranquillity.

"Poor old Governor!" she said softly.

"Poor old Governor! Rich old Governor, you mean. At all events, if he isn't rich, his daughter must be rolling in money. I believe that if the old gentleman could eat gold, she'd let him have it. She's always bringing him something. She's always making him presents. She turns the servants' heads with half-crowns and new caps. She's promised me a gold watch from Benson's in Ludgate Hill on her papa's next birthday. Such a lady as she is too! such horses and carriages, such diamonds and pearls, and such a dear little duck of a Blenheim spaniel!"

"I don't like her," Miss Puffin remarked quietly.

"That's because you're jealous of her, you mean-spirited thing. You hate her because she's pretty, and has got plenty of money, and hasn't got a face like a sick rabbit with pink eyes."

Miss Puffin just raised those same ill-spoken-of eyes to about a level with the scraggy neck of the old woman.

"She's very kind to her father," she returned, "and does her best to make the Governor happy; apart from that, I think—I don't know why, but I'm sure of it—that Mrs. Armytage is a very wicked woman. Her very laugh makes one shudder."

This was an exceedingly long speech for the ordinarily taciturn Puffin, and she was quite confused with her loquacity; and plunging into silence, proceeded to carry the plates, two and two, from the room. At this stage, it wanting but ten minutes to dinner-time, it was Mrs. Caesar Donkin's invariable custom to remark that she must really go and make herself tidy. The memory of Puffin ran not to the contrary regarding this remark; and Mrs. Donkin used duly to disappear to some mysterious chamber in the upper stories which served as her sleeping apartment. When she reappeared, her hands were invested with a pair of curiously brown and ragged mittens, in which the fissures of age struggled with the original interstices of the network; and those who were permitted to

approach Mrs. Donkin could not avoid an impression, palpable to the olfactory sense, that the completion of her toilette had been in some way assisted by the consumption, either by herself or by her twin-sister, of some alcoholic preparation into which the cordial known as peppermint had entered.

Miss Puffin took the dessert to the dining-room by easy stages, and had just landed the figs on the sideboard when a double knock of alarming length and resonance echoed through the house.

For the matter of that, all the boarders knocked loud; some whose hands were stiff or chalkstony plied the knocker somewhat tremulously and in uncertain cadence; but all the sexagenarians did their best to produce sonorous rat-tats. Their strength was in the main but labour and sorrow now; and there was some feeble pleasure to be derived even from the power of knocking a good loud series of reverberations. The ring which passed through the lion's head on the door was good to them, and thundered on its little anvil bravely. Mrs. Caesar Donkin let them knock as vigorously as they could and chose to do. It was an indulgence for which she forebore to charge in the monthly bills.

The double knock, or rather the personage whose advent it announced, was duly ushered upstairs; and a few moments afterwards a succession of double knocks more or less resounding was heard, as the old gentlemen came home from their clubs, their trots in the Park, and the other amusements they devised for killing their old enemy Time. He it was that most of all they had to fear. Like a usurer who begins to have doubts of the solvency of a spendthrift deep in his books, he exacted heavier and heavier interest for every year of life he granted them; yet the poor old moths could not help wasting the brief span that remained to them, and puzzled their wits to get rid of the precious moments that Time in his tolerance permitted them still to enjoy.

Let the venue be changed to the dining-room, an intensely respectable and gloomy apartment of the family-vault order of architecture, the windows of which commanded an extensive view of the premises of a statuary opposite, whose front garden was decorated in a lively manner with cenotaphs, broken columns, monumental tablets, garden vases, the Venus of Milo, the bald-faced stag, the Discobolus, the dog of Alcibiades, the late Mr. Wilberforce, and the Emperor Napoleon. There was the usual sarcophagus wine-cooler under the side-board of the dining-room; a cheerful bust of a Grecian philosopher with his nose broken off; and a water-colour view of a building that might have been either a union workhouse, a baths and washhouses, or a baronial hall, and which seemed to have been borrowed from the fine-arts gallery of a house-agent.

A bell that was suggestive of mingled reminiscences of a sexton's tolling for the departing and of muffins had been tinkling for some five minutes, to warn the inmates of Mrs. Caesar Donkin's establishment that dinner was served; and at a few minutes after seven the old boys came

shambling and tottering down the staircase from the drawing-room, each with a lady on his arm.

I have called them for conciseness the Sexagenarians, but it has already been pointed out that while Mrs. Cæsar insisted on a minimum, she totally ignored the maximum in age. Some of the gentlemen present had passed their seventh, some were rapidly approaching their eighth lustre. Old General Tibby, it was clear, would never see seventy-three again. This hero of a hundred field-days was immensely decrepit and fatuous, and as sprightly as his manifold infirmities would allow him to be. He was elaborately got up, and there was nothing true about him but his voice, which, as all the paint and padding in the world will not mend flaws in the vocal organ, was cracked and shrill, as be seemed his advanced age. Mr. Fogo was not so old by half a score of years, and wore much better. Something of the Lancastrian muscle—of the thew and sinew of the strong men who hail from the backbone of England, and bulk large, so to speak, in the forefront of English humanity—yet adhered to him. It has already been hinted that this retired and affluent cotton-broker had a fancy for being mistaken for a military man. It would have been indeed a very great mistake to assume that he was one; for "*bourgeois*" was written in every line of his healthy vacuous countenance; but as Mr. Fogo was over six feet high, and had sufficiently broad shoulders, and did not stoop much, he took to wearing a black stock, without any perceptible shirt-collar, a blue surtout tightly buttoned up to his throat, and a stripe down either leg of his trousers. He affected high heels to his boots likewise, carried a bamboo-cane in one hand, and dangled a stout buckskin glove in the other. He subscribed to the *Army List*, knew all the military clubs by sight, frequently hovered on their door-steps, when there was the slightest shadow of a pretence to ask for one of the members, and would have dearly liked to belong to either of the United Service reunions, could he have got any one to propose and second him. Before coming to Mrs. Donkin's he had occupied apartments in that great half-pay Patmos St. Alban's Place, Haymarket; but the red-jackets and crossing-sweepers soon found out that he was no soldier. When they called him "captain" it was ironically, and when they touched their ragged caps to him it was with a sneer. In the end he fled the purlieus of the camp in disgust; but on levee-days he was still to be found haunting the avenues to St. James's and the Horse Guards. He knew all the promotions and appointments in the *Gazette*; he was familiar with the facings, services, and motto of every regiment in the service; he was glib in the use of abstruse terms relative to fortifications and military tactics; and he was an adept at the configuration of a plan of the battle of Waterloo, on the mahogany after dinner:—the positions of the French and allied armies being marked out by means of nut-crackers, bits of orange-peel, and thin streaks of port-wine. Beyond this he was perfectly harmless, and paid his way like a gentleman.

There were altogether eight old men who partook of the dignified

hospitality of Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace. Tibby and Fogo you have been already introduced to. Captain O'Ballygrumble's energies—he was seventy—were mainly confined to the endeavour to conceal the fact that he was an Irishman. When it is mentioned that his appearance was as Hibernian as his name, and that his speech was of the purest Dublin jackeen just racked through a cask of Cork whisky, it is unnecessary to add that his attempt did not succeed. He was called captain—or called himself so—from having formerly held a commission in a militia regiment. He was a ladies' man, but of the ferocious, not the sentimental order. He bragged much of having blown out the brains of many brothers who objected to the attentions he had paid to their sisters. When a divorce case in high life became a topic of conversation, he was used to wink significantly, and to hint that he could say a great deal more about that "little matter" if he chose. He pleaded guilty to the charge of ogling the ladies in Kensington Gardens. The truth is, that he glared at them horribly, brushed past them offensively, and addressed them impertinently, whenever he had an opportunity; and his dyed whiskers and large black teeth were the terror of well-disposed nursery-maids and young ladies' boarding-schools. It was whispered that he had been tried in early life for the abduction of an heiress; and it was known that he had made an offer of marriage to Lady Madapolam, widow of the great City alderman Sir Callimanco Madapolam, who had over two hundred thousand pounds to her jointure. His suit was scornfully rejected; but nothing deterred, O'Ballygrumble followed the lady about from watering-place to watering-place,—from Brighton to Cheltenham, from Nice to Aix-la-Chapelle,—pursuing her with his odious attentions. The lady had been foolish enough to send a few curt replies to the oceans of love-letters with which he inundated her; and his last *coup* was to threaten to publish all the correspondence that had passed between them. After this, it was said that Lady Madapolam—whose servants, male and female, he had alternately cajoled and caned into his interest—had bought her persecutor off with a handsome annual allowance. The good lady didn't require a second husband. She spent her dividends very comfortably in eating and drinking, in pills and potions,—she was known to every *Pharmacien Anglais* from the Seine to the Danube; in forming a library of theological literature; in subscribing to charitable associations for recondite philanthropic purposes, and which generally, after the third annual dinner, ended by the secretary's absconding, and the whole affair turning out to be a gross swindle and imposition. The respected name of Lady Madapolam headed the subscription to The Infant Hottentot's Gratuitous Hockey-stick and Tip-cat Distribution Society, in connection with the Additional Knife and Fork and Digestive Pill Aid to Destitute Cannibals Association. Friendly George Gaffer was in the last-named bubble. George was *Sec. pro tem.*, and laid the foundations of many future dinner-invitations among his private friends by distributing gratuitous tickets among them for the first grand festival at the Free-

masons' Tavern. The Gafferer was great while the society lasted. He was wont to boast of his "interest with the press," and absolutely procured the insertion of a ten-line paragraph in the *Weekly Cad* newspaper, in which the pressing claims of the destitute cannibals, more especially in the Fee-jee and Cruel Islands, to a larger supply of knives, forks, and Cockle's pills were dwelt upon. "Shall these embryo Christians," asked the paragraph ("embryo" was a good term, and told immensely), "die of indigestion? Missionaries are well known to be tough. Who would refuse the poor cannibal his knife, his fork, and his pill-box?" O'Howler wrote the above glowing lines, and lived at free quarters on the charity for a month afterwards. Friendly George Gafferer constituted himself into a committee of taste, and delivered some opinions most valuable in an epicurean point of view, when asked into the bar-parlour of the Freemasons', and regaled, free of expense, with turtle-soup for lunch, peculiar Madeira, and choice Regalias. A good soul George Gafferer, and nobody's friend but his own.

But Captain O'Ballygrumble has been left in the lurch while I have been digressing upon George Gafferer. (The Additional Aid Society turned out to be an awful delusion; and it was with difficulty that the Treasurer and Sec. *pro. tem.* escaped legal proceedings.) The Captain was *en retraite* now, and lived gaily enough upon his property, whence-soever it may have proceeded. He said that he bore Lady Madapolam no malice; but that he had been "skyandalously threatened throughout the affair, and that she would have done much better to marry a Milesian gentleman of ancient descent, than to spend thousands in building churches where they were not wanted." Such was the Captain. He would have been very much like the bragging and fortune-hunting Irishman so familiar to us on the stage, had he not been the very image of the bragging and fortune-hunting Irishman we see in real life.

Mr. Chatwynd was very old, thin, silent, gentlemanly, and inoffensive. He was known to be rich, to be a member of the Society of Antiquaries, and of the Travellers' Club. Second-hand booksellers and dealers in mediæval wares were continually sending him catalogues by post. He had chambers in Staple Inn, Holborn, where he was supposed to possess a magnificent collection of pictures, busts, gems, China, and rare editions. Beyond a habit of taking snuff at dinner-time, and an abhorrence of fat meat, he had no very remarkable peculiarities.

The rest of the old men, with one exception, claim no special notice. They were nonentities. They wheezed and grumbled, they coughed and crooned, they hemmed and hawed, and occasionally drivelled. They were frightened at the ferocity of Captain O'Ballygrumble, and awed by the quiet contempt of Mr. Chatwynd, who for all his ripe age was erect and valid, and was known to be a person of superior attainments. Their conversation was the very baldest chat. Take away their clothes, and chains, and rings, their well-spread table, and soft couches, and there was not much to choose between these ancients and the frieze-clad dotards

you see warming their wafer-like palms over the stove in the old man's ward of a workhouse. It was not good to look upon them, either when they were solitary and doddered about in blank search of their health and their memory, or when meat had warmed them into active munching and slavering, or drink had made them garrulous. Poor old men, where were they all going? There was nothing about them to remind him who considered them of those reverend hermits of old, who dwelt in caves and fed on roots, and prayed continually. They were all self-indulgent, and, most of them, sordidly avaricious. The coarse dirty old woman who ruled over the house rather frightened than persuaded them out of their money. A greedy old man needs often to be terrified with stripes as though he were a greedy schoolboy; and not one of Mrs. Donkin's boarders could stand the lashings of her tongue. For the rest, they were the kind of dilapidated gentlemen you see wandering about Pall Mall and the Opera Colonnade on warm afternoons; who leer into the milliners' shops in the Burlington Arcade, and the pastrycook's at the Regent Circus, and sometimes totter through the Pantheon Bazaar to the conservatory, where the macaws and cockatoos scream at them. And more than one of Mrs. Caesar Donkin's boarders were, it is to be feared, very wicked old boys indeed. But "the Governor"? Who was he? what was he like? and how came he by the gubernatorial title? you may ask. The Governor was the oldest inmate of Number 15 Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace. Indeed, he was an old, old man, and venerable to look upon. His silky snowy locks flowed down his shoulders; his linen was scrupulously clean and white; and through his great infirmities he was permitted by Mrs. Donkin to appear at the dinner-table in his dressing-gown and slippers. When he spoke, his speech was gentle, courteous, and dignified; but he was perforce not very talkative, for he was almost entirely deaf; and his reverend head was garnished with a pair of ear-trumpets, secured by elastic bands round his white forehead, and which in their convolutions reminded one of a ram of the highest respectability and the greatest antiquity. He was so feeble that when his daughter was not present to assist him he had to be wheeled in and out of the dining-room in an arm-chair, and he was propped up by pillows during the repast. He rose very late, breakfasted in his room, and retired to rest very early. He was continually visited by eminent physicians. A most handsome stipend was paid for his lodging and maintenance; Mrs. Caesar Donkin was devoted to him; and even the undemonstrative Puffin showed how much she was interested in him. Often the Governor would say, in his refined and dignified manner, that, but "for his great age and infirmities, nothing would afford him greater gratification than to offer his hand to a virtuous and well-conducted young woman, who could bring herself to cheer the winter of an old man's days." At this the sensitive Puffin would tremble, and grow pale and red by turns; and then, mustering up courage, she would shout into one of the ear-trumpets, that he had plenty more years before him, and that

Dr. Sardonix's good care would speedily restore him to health and strength. At which the Governor would shake his head with an expression of resigned negation.

Yes: Dr. Sardonix attended the Governor. He talked every where of his patience under suffering, his amiable disposition, and his distinguished manners. A true gentleman the doctor declared him to be, and one of the old school. He extolled the filial devotion of the Governor's daughter to the skies. "It is true," the doctor would say, "that the brilliant position which Mrs. Armytage fills in society frequently calls her abroad; but no sooner does she arrive in England, than she flies—literally flies, my dear sir—to the side of her venerated parent. Ah, what a daughter! what a model for all daughters, high and low!"

"I am glad there is some good in that artful and designing creature," Miss Magdalen Hill once chose to remark when the name of the detested widow was mentioned, and her filial piety eulogised.

"Artful and designing!" the doctor echoed, holding up his white hands in well-simulated astonishment. "Come, come, let us not be too hard upon this most charming of butterflies,—this most seductive of gilded moths."

"Say serpents, doctor," poor Lady Goldthorpe chimed in. "She's a nasty hypocritical rattlesnake. I never could a-bear the creature, with her fly-by-night curls. I wish they were false; but they ain't, I know, and more's the pity. I tell you she's no good. Years ago, when my poor dear dead darling Hugh come back from India on his leave, and stopped in Paris, that woman tried to wind him round her finger. I found one of her yellow curls in his cigar-case once—"

"Mamma!" Magdalen expostulated, with a warning finger, a blush, and a sigh.

"You may call her any thing you like, dear ladies," the discreet physician would remark; "but what would you have? She is a woman of the world. She occupies the exceptional and invidious place of a rich and pretty—well, not pretty, but engaging—widow. She belongs to Vanity Fair, dear Lady Goldthorpe. Surely you remember the charming character of Becky Sharpe."

"No," the simple lady replied; "I never read no novels. I had a maid called Becky Sharpe once, and she ran away with three bottles of eau-de-cologne, a true-lover's-knot brooch, and all the silver stoppers off the bottles in my dressing-case, let alone a pair of laced sleeves and a false character she left behind her. Her name turned out to be, when Sir Jasper transported her,—not to be Sharpe at all, but Bowdler."

"I," Magdalen said, rising at this stage of the colloquy, "have read the wonderful drama of human life to which Doctor Sardonix refers. Unless I am mistaken, Becky Sharpe was in the end found out. It may be that the same fate will happen, some day or another, to this pattern and paragon of filial piety, whose name I disdain to recall."

It is said that when people are talking about us our ears burn. I

wonder which one it is, the right or the left, that tingles and feels hot when people are talking against us. It is well that the little widow had curls; for giving one ear to the men, and appropriating another to the women, what flaming lobes Mrs. Armytage must have had from morning till night underneath those shining locks of hers!

Had she known, or did she divine half the evil that was spoken against her, she would not have deviated from the path of duty she had traced out for herself regarding her papa. Her behaviour towards him was more than amiable, more than admirable: it was incomparable. Mrs. Cæsar Donkin looked upon her as the ancients might have looked upon the Grecian daughter, or the Sansculottes of the Reign of Terror upon the young lady who drank a glass of blood to save her father from the scaffold. Puffin, to be sure, disparaged her; but then Puffin had her motives. Perhaps Magdalen had her motives also, but she was too haughty to own them. The chest of that young person's thoughts closed with a spring, the key was lost, and the thoughts mouldered into skeletons within.

The Governor took the homage and the affection of which he was the object with his unvarying and dignified serenity. He was good enough to express to Mrs. Donkin his belief that in the whole world there was not such another daughter to be found as his Florence; beyond that admission he suffered himself to be loved—*se laissait aimer*, and repaid the almost idolatry which was lavished on him with beaming smiles, of which he had, to all appearance, an inexhaustible stock. It was doubtful why he was called "the Governor," what he had governed, or where had been the seat of his government. He was too fine a gentleman to be asked impertinent questions, even if he had not been too deaf to answer them. He had had something to do with the colonies—with the West-India Islands, it was generally understood. A chance reference to Tobago had once been dropped by his daughter. Was he the original

" Old man of Tobago,
Who lived on rice, sugar, and sago,
Till the doctor one day
Unto him did say,
To a roast leg of mutton you may go" ?

No one could give an opinion with certainty as to this important question. It was, however, generally agreed that he was not only wealthy himself but the cause of wealth in others; to wit, in his daughter, whom he had splendidly dowered, and who was the widow besides of an Indian officer of large means. Mrs. Donkin had lost her faith in affluent Orientals. The remembrance of the perfidy of Jaghire was a wound not yet healed; but even she did not refuse to place credence in the many lacs of rupees left to his relict by Major Armytage.

It must appear to the reader that while these personal matters were under discussion the ancient boarders of Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace have been kept waiting an unconscionably long time for their dinners; and they were crusty old gentlemen, believe me, who resented even a three minutes' delay in the appearance of the soup. Be not alarmed, however; while we have

been wandering from the Governor to the Goldthorpes, and from Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace to Onyx Square,—there was not a mile distance between the boarding-house and the palace of Mammon,—Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's *pensionnaires* have been proceeding with their repast as well as ever their teeth and their trembling hands would let them. They have had soup; they have had fish—brill, falsely called turbot, at the top, skate at the bottom; they have had *entrées*—Psha! why should I give you the entire bill of fare? It is enough to say that the entire banquet was a capital imitation of a first-rate dinner, but that it was in reality a very bad one. There was plenty of electro-plate about, *épergnes* filled with artificial flowers, chased vases for the champagne—which, out of compliment to the ladies, was provided in turns by the old gentlemen,—filigree bread-baskets, finger-glasses, table-napkins, a battered old waiter full of weak rose-water. passed round after the cheese,—all the paraphernalia, in fact, of an expensive and well-served feast. All that was wanting were good meats and vegetables. Herein lay the profit of Mrs. Cæsar Donkin, and herein was displayed her ingenuity and statecraft. The rose-water didn't cost a farthing a day, the electro-plate wore well, the artificial flowers were in perennial bloom, the table-napkins were washed, like every article of linen in the establishment by the dozen, and surely finger glasses are cheap enough! Altogether, however, these odds-and-ends of good society made a brave show. It was the style that did it, Mrs. Donkin said; and even those who came away hungry from her symposia admitted that she certainly did give very stylish dinners. With a judicious and discriminating use of style, you may do almost every thing in this sublunary world. In letters you may conceal your ignorance and your dullness,—in art you may atone for imperfect drawing and clumsy manipulation,—in the concerns of domestic life you may hide half your meannesses and shabbinesses, by artful recourse to style. For it is an impalpable powder which, when dexterously thrown in the eyes of mankind, affects them with a happy blindness.

There: the clattering of knives and forks is over. A remarkable cheese, very much like a dilapidated drum, and coming, it is to be suspected, from North Wiltshire, but which Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's stylishness caused to do duty as a 'Stilton, has been removed. The grand cut-glass stand, with three lamentable forked sprigs of celery drooping from it, and the little pellet of butter, with its elaborate knife of electro-ware, have been handed round; the cloth has been drawn, as the reporters write of public dinners; the famous dessert has been put on the table; the decanters of port or claret belonging to each boarder, and each labelled with his name, have been produced from the recesses of the sideboard; and the Sexagenarians begin to enjoy themselves. They are but a feeble folk, and scant of that breath from a total want of which they must all, at no very distant period, perish. *Cras nobis*, my brethren;—and the conversation is rather by fits and starts than sustained; but there is a little squabble now and then, and perhaps a weak morsel of love-making; and these relieve the monotony of the chatter.

Love-making? Yes, madam; and that reminds the narrator of a serious error of omission. It is customary, I am aware, at public banquets to make the toast of "the ladies" one of, if not *the* very last of, the evening. There is surely no need in private life to be so ungallant; so with the first glass of wine, if you please, let us look towards the ladies, and evince a due solicitude for their very good health. I bow towards the end of the table where sits Mrs. Cæsar Donkin, looking more like a witch than ever. Beyond the mittens, Mrs. Donkin scorned to make any alteration in her toilette, even on the most festive occasions. Thé Sexagenarians feared her too much to remonstrate. Miss Puffin, indeed, spruced herself up to the extent of putting on over her faded *barège* a black silk jacket, which in a strong light showed reflections of an orange-tawny hue, and which was currently reported to have been made out of a hatband presented to her grandfather on the occasion of his attending the obsequies of the late lamented Marquis of Granby. But Mrs. Cæsar Donkin and Miss Puffin were not the only members of their charming sex who graced the dinner-table. There were lady-boarders in Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace. For example, on the left of General Tibby—the post of his right being occupied by Puffin—sat old Mrs. Vanderpant, widow of a former consul at the port of Bristol of his majesty the King of the Netherlands. She was very fat, she was very good-tempered. From whatever part of Holland she came, it could not have been from the clean village of Brock, near Amsterdam; for she did not show the slightest distaste to Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's slatternliness. Mrs. Vanderpant had a comfortable pension paid to her quarterly by a Dutch house in the cheese and butter trade in Trinity Square, and in which her deceased husband had held a share. She walked resolutely every Sunday morning to the old Dutch church in Austin Friars, returning in a cab, and always having a terrific dispute with the driver on the question of sixpence. First she refused to pay him; then she offered him some of the minor coinage of the Low Countries, which she kept by her in a wash-leather bag; then she abused him roundly in Dutch; finally, she paid him, slammed the door in his face, drank two glasses of cherry-brandy, informed any one who might be present that all cabmen were "tam tieves," and went to bed until dinner-time. There was little variety in her life; but beyond an ugly word (imperfectly pronounced, which may have divested it of some of its sinfulness) there was no harm in Mrs. Vanderpant.

Captain O'Ballygrumble, who was croupier,—Mr. Cæsar Donkin never putting in an appearance at meal-times,—had for right-hand neighbour a countrywoman of his own, Miss MacShandrydan (of the Shandrydans of Booterstown); while his attentions to the left were due to Miss Bubb. Althea MacShandrydan was fifty, and an invalid. She suffered from chronic sickness. Not love-sickness; there was but one person in the world for whom Miss MacShandrydan cared one potato-peeling, and that was herself. Not bodily sickness; she was as strong as a grenadier, and had as fine an appetite as the celebrated bold dragoon, "with his long sword,

saddle, bridle, O," of the ballad. She was simply sick, and nearly sick to death with affectation. She had shone many years before in a kind of meteoric gleam on the reflex of the reflection of the Irish viceregal court. The shadow of one of the Lord-Lieutenant's footmen had once crossed her path, and made her aristocratic for ever. She was Sackville Street at secondhand, a washed-out Westmoreland Street, a faded phantom of the Phoenix Park. She made you very nearly as sick as she was herself with her meagre prattle about "the Kyastle" and the "Juke of Richmond's aid-du-congs." She called a street-cab "a floy," and asked people what the inside of an omnibus was like. The old hypocrite! She was the bane and torment of every cad between the Marble Arch and Charing Cross. She was so affected that she could scarcely speak, and, although she had a fine native brogue of her own, lisped, and chewed her silly words, marching as mincingly in her speech as Agag on the earth, and driving irritable people to meditate the hewing of her in pieces, even as it befell Agag.

She had just enough money to pay her expenses in Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace, and to buy portraits of crowned heads and of the higher nobility at the secondhand-print shops. Her bed-chamber was hung round with pale effigies of his late H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, George the Fourth in a brown jasey and silk-covered pianoforte legs, the Earl of Liverpool, and the Hetman Platoff. She had a large wardrobe, which Mrs. Donkin greedily coveted, and of which the shawls, dresses, laces, and other woman's frippery, might have made a somewhat handsome appearance at certain Castle levees and theatrical-command nights in Dublin early in the century. She always bought the Red-Book of the year before last cheap; and, so far as you could understand her for lisping, was fond of dilating on the claims of her brother Hercules MacShandrydan, "kinneected with the Goveramhent," to the dormant peerage of Derrymacash. Captain O'Ballygrumble hated her with a fierce and implacable loathing, and declared that she had never been any thing more than a governess in a day-school at Dunleary, and that Hercules her brother had first been a tithe-proctor, and next an exciseman, and was now a retired sergeant in the constabulary.

Miss Bubb was of English extraction. She made no secret of the fact of her family being connected with that branch of commerce involving a traffic in grocery. Don't you remember Bubb and Grubb, family tea-dealers, at the Golden Biggin in Oxford Street? It was Bubb who introduced the "Efflorescent Gunpowder at Two and Eleven," by selling which (in four-pound packages) he realised a fortune. Matilda Bubb had in early life made up many parcels; but the sugar of her career was sanded by the treachery of a shopman, who made violent love to her, and actually proposed, but, finding that old Bubb would give nothing down to his daughter, married Miss Pruin of the Golden Caddy, the opposition grocer's directly opposite; and by dint of puffing advertisements, plate-glass, an electro-plated coffee-mill with a working steam-engine, and a

vast display of cartoons representing the cultivation and preparation of the fragrant herb as pursued by the natives in the interior of China, succeeded in depriving Bubb and Grubb of nine-tenths of their customers. Old Bubb, however, dying, left his only daughter a corpulent independence; and Matilda was scarcely out of her mourning ere she had the gratification of seeing her faithless swain made condignly bankrupt. He fled to Tasmania, without a certificate, and with incipient delirium tremens, and his wife was compelled to take in needlework for a livelihood. *Sic itur ad astra*; and such is very frequently the end of plate-glass windows, electroplated coffee-mills, and Chinese cartoons.

Miss Bubb was the only boarder in Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace who kept a carriage—a roomy old fly of the glass-coach order. She was very soft, impressionable, and, in a melancholy manner, good-humoured. She read sentimental novels from morning to night. She nourished a long and pensive curl of an ashen hue by the side of either wan cheek, and her left eye was a glass one. Poor Miss Bubb!

The two Misses Cherrygo would have been exceedingly annoyed if you had not taken notice of them; but really there was little in their persons or character to call, in this place at least, for extended notice. They were middle-aged twins, who dressed alike, and wore their hair alike, and frequently had their arms round one another's waists. They sang duets together at the piano in the drawing-room. They went shopping together. In fact, they were inseparable. Old Cherrygo, their papa, who had formerly been connected in some manner with the Commissariat, and was said to owe the major part of his handsome competence to successful malversations in bullocks and rum,—to him was attributed the celebrated *mot*, that “for a forlorn hope there’s nothing like fasting;”—had formerly occupied apartments beneath Mrs. Donkin’s roof. He had the egregious folly and baseness to go away and marry a designing creature who kept a fancy repository in Præd Street, Paddington, and who, I am delighted to say, made his married life one continuous series of aggravated assaults on her part. Is not the case of Cherrygo *versus* Cherrygo even now down for trial before Sir Cresswell Cresswell, and is not the wretched old Commissary seeking a judicial separation on the ground of cruelty? When he left Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace, a reprobate and a deceiver, this elderly outcast formally disinherited his daughters. The lady who kept the fancy repository is said, indeed, to have declared to a confidential charwoman, on the very eve of their bridal, that the daughters of that old fool should never darken her doors. Fortunately the Misses Cherrygo were not destitute. An uncle, who had made a nice little fortune during the great war by buying up sailors’ claims to prize-money at a discount of about seventy-five per cent, bequeathed his virtuous savings to his nieces, and they had quite enough to live upon. The Misses Cherrygo passed, then, a quiet and tranquil life, alternately executing elaborate chair-covers in Berlin wool, and abusing the abandoned Commissary their papa. To that same Berlin wool must

be ascribed, as a first cause, their alienation from a never fond but still convenient parent. Had they never requested the elder Cherrygo to call at the repository in Praed Street, for the purpose of matching two shades of orange and one of purple, he would probably have never seen Miss Brownadder, the designing person who subsequently became his wife.

These were all the lady-boarders. Mrs. Donkin made no stipulation as to their age, and even charged them less for their board than she did the gentlemen. The ladies were useful to her. It was part of Mrs. Donkin's policy so to contrive matters that every Sexagenarian should be in love with at least one, if not two, of her female inmates. Most of them fell into Cupid's trap easily enough. Chatwynd, indeed, was shy and reticent; but he was so quiet, and in every way so desirable a lodger, that his want of susceptibility was overlooked. Captain O'Ballygrumble made love to the ladies all round, when he was in a good temper, and always excepting Miss Shandrydan; and as for the poor old Governor, it quite suited Mrs. Caesar Donkin's purpose that all he had to do with love should be in enjoying the worship of his daughter.

She, the daughter, Mrs. Armytage, was the guest this evening. She often came to dine. She liked to sit next to her darling papa. She complimented Mrs. Donkin. She complimented the ladies. She complimented the gentlemen. There was little individual love-making on the days she came, for all the Sexagenarians were wild after Mrs. Armytage, and their homage was centred in her. Curiously, the older ladies were not jealous of her. She seemed to be so dazzling, so accomplished, so distinguished, as to belong quite to another world. She could not, it was argued, be setting her cap at any of these poor worn-out, creeping, chattering dotards. If her aim was wealthy caducity, she might marry a gouty marquis, or a paralytic duke, if she liked. The Governor was good enough to remark one day that his daughter had refused a Russian Ambassador to a foreign court, who was the owner of half the Ukraine, and half the peasants living thereupon. "But," continued the Governor, "my beloved Florence will never form a fresh alliance so long as her poor old father lives." So the little lady was highly popular in Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace, and was a queen there, as she was every where else, save in a certain dingy chamber in Coger's Inn, Strand, and a certain mouldy back-kitchen in Badger Lane, Stockwell. Aha! what king, what queen may there be, I wonder, who in some place or another is not reckoned of any more account than a beggar, and, with crown on head and sceptre in hand, has not to eat the humblest of humble pie.

The Governor did not stay long over his wine. He drank three glasses of sound old port-wine, of which he always kept an abundant store, and which he or his daughter freely dispensed to the company in general, and to Mrs. Donkin in particular. It was not his custom to join the ladies in the drawing-room. He was too much of an invalid to bear so much fatigue. It was a very beautiful and interesting sight to see his tottering steps directed to the door by his devoted daughter. She

always assisted him to his bedchamber ; and the parent and child passed an hour or so, in the solace of cheerful and innocent conversation, before the good old Governor retired to rest. He was unusually feeble on this present evening, and leant on his daughter's arm with an unusual pressure. All the Sexagenarians rose as the pair took their departure ; and even the ferocious O'Ballygrumble rushed to the door, and held it obsequiously open.

"What a charming creature !" mumbled General Tibby.

"A model daughter," sighed Mr. Bowdler.

"A doosed fine woman," remarked Mr. Fogo, in his peremptory military voice.

The ladies joined their little twitterings in the chorus of applause, and, when they reached the drawing-room, proceeded to criticise Mrs. Armytage's jewellery, her lace, her flounces, and her ringlets. There was but one voice heard in disparagement, and that was, oddly, from good-natured Mrs. Vanderpant.

"I not like her laugh, he, he !" the good lady remarked, sinking on a sofa ; "and, 'pon my word, I tink she paint."

The Governor occupied a large and commodious bedchamber on the second-floor. He had furnished it himself, and, as this involved no diminution of Mrs. Donkin's usual charges, that lady was quite content to allow him to furnish it in what manner he pleased. It was by no means an uncomfortable apartment, and, to judge from the number of books and papers scattered about, the Governor was a gentleman of studious if not literary pursuits.

Florence led the old man into this chamber, and, until they had passed the very threshold, he continued to totter, and she to guide his footsteps, looking up in his face meanwhile with an expression of the tenderest solicitude. They were no sooner inside the door, however, and that door was no sooner closed upon them, and carefully locked, than a very remarkable change took place in the demeanour both of Mrs. Florence Armytage and of her venerable papa. She was no longer the Grecian daughter, the modern Mademoiselle de Sombreuil, ready to quaff a glass of blood as though it were one of Chateau Lafitte to redeem the head of her papa from the glaive of the guillotine. She became, with electric rapidity, our own familiar Mrs. Armytage, the fascinating widow, the laughing tenant of the first-floor in the Rue Grande-des-Petites-Maisons—the airy, saucy, *debonnaire* little creature, who was wont to shake her sunny ringlets and play with her lap-dag. Her pathetic veneration for the Governor had all vanished ; not an iota was left of her affectionate solicitude. She dropped his arm without the slightest ceremony, and tripping to a large easy-chair, flung herself on to the cushions, and laughed long and heartily in her old, merry, satirical, desperately-wicked fashion.

But if the change that had occurred in this pattern of filial affection was sudden and astonishing, not less speedy and peculiar was that which came over the respected gentleman who was dignified with the name of

Governor. The deformed became all at once transformed, and Mr. Hartley Livingstone, who had entered the room a confirmed valetudinarian, to whom the seldom-erring judgment of Mrs. Donkin would have given at least seventy-seven years, sat down in an arm-chair opposite his daughter a hale, strong, personable man, to all appearance short of fifty years of age. For he had plucked off his flowing white locks; he had cast aside his ram-like ear-trumpets; he had discarded his green shade; he had divested his neck of its thick swathings of linen. His halt, his hobble, and his stoop had all disappeared; and he sat grinning with a remarkably fine set of even white teeth, a pair of gleaming hazel eyes, and a closely cropped bullet-head of crisp black hair. It was the story of Sixtus the Fifth over again; and the perfidy of Jaghire was repeated, with five hundred per cent in its audacious deception added.

The first act of this metamorphosed patriarch was to produce from a cheffonier a black bottle and a glass, and to mix himself a comfortably stiff glass of brandy-and-water. He next opened a cigar-case, and, producing a fine havannah, lighted and proceeded to smoke it, with an aspect of cheerful deliberation.

"My medical attendants recommend the use of the aromatic herb tobacco for the poor old Governor," he remarked, with a coarse laugh, entirely different from his former calmly-dignified manner. "Nobody but the invalid Governor is allowed to smoke in this house; but he pays so well, that the Witch of Endor would allow him to walk on the ceiling, or have a brass band at the window, if it was agreeable to him. He does what he likes, the interesting old sufferer. Ho, ho!"

The man's laugh was inexpressibly repulsive. He seldom spoke without a hard metallic "Ho, ho!" as a refrain. It was his daughter's laugh in its crude and rugose stage;—his was the vocal bronze to her shining silver. He had a habit, too, of speaking of himself in the third person, of flattering himself grossly, and of slapping his large thigh, which by no means enhanced the geniality of his manner.

"He drinks the best and smokes the best, the poor old Governor does," he went on. "Legs and feet, what a start it is!"

"He smokes very strong tobacco and drinks more than is good for him," his daughter—yes, she was his daughter—replied; "and in private life resembles Gallows Dick the bushranger much more than Mr. Hartley Livingstone, sometime Member of Council at St. Kitts, and said to have been Governor of Nevis."

"It wasn't Nevis," broke in the Governor, "it was Tobago. They all say it was Tobago, down-stairs. Ho! ho! and it was at Demerara, not at St. Kitts, that I exercised legislative functions as a member of the Court of Policy. Won't you have a little drop of something that'll do you good, Flo?"

To a third person—if such a third had been present at this interview—there could not have been from the outset the slightest doubt that Mr. Hartley Livingstone of the West Indies, or Gallows Dick of the

bush, or the Governor of Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace, Bayswater, was an undisguised and unmitigated Ruffian. Villain and ruffian, coarse, low, cunning, and unscrupulous, were written in every line of his perfectly healthy face. Withal the man's eyes glistened with an ardent, devouring, almost savage love and admiration for his daughter. Their positions were reversed. He no longer suffered himself to be loved, as at the dinner-table. 'Twas she who endured endearment, and, to do Mrs. Armytage justice, she took all her papa's affection in a philosophical if not a demonstrative spirit.

Just then there came a little knock at the door.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EVE OF THE DELUGE.

THERE were fortunately two doors to the Governor's bedchamber, and the place was as secure from intrusion as the sanctum of Mr. Sims in Coger's Inn. Mr. Livingstone being very subject to colds, was necessarily very much afraid of draughts; and he had not only carefully listed and sand-bagged the top and bottom of the outer door, but, at his own expense, had fitted up an inner portal, covered with green baize. Those who knocked had to use their knuckles pretty freely before the sound penetrated to the chamber itself.

Mrs. Armytage rose at the summons, went to the door, and in a few moments returned.

"It was the woman of the house," she said, reseating herself.

"What! the Witch of Endor? What did the old sorceress want?"

"She asked some idle question about gruel, or foot-baths, or something equally trivial. She is always prowling and prying about. Do you think it is mere old woman's curiosity, or do you imagine that she suspects any thing?"

"She had better not suspect any thing," replied Mr. Hartley Livingstone, with a very grim and significant leer. "I don't think she would have many more opportunities for indulging her suspicions."

"What do you mean?" his daughter asked, quietly raising her pretty eyes.

"He means what he says, this party does," returned the ruffian. "He means this."

He drove one clenched fist against the open palm of his other hand. It made a hard dull sound. Mrs. Armytage smiled bitterly.

"You are still a child, father," she said. "Have you worked and studied so long that you do not know that fists, and knives, and pistols are the weapons of fools? You are a good actor enough, and down-stairs you really look and act like a gentleman. I wish you could divest yourself of your ruffianism when you retire into private life."

"Don't call names, Flo," the Governor responded, with his ugly

grin, half-jokingly and half-angrily. "If Dick's a ruffian, my fine ladyship is a ruffian's daughter. He doesn't like to be called a ruffian, he doesn't. It riles him. Come and kiss me, Flo, or by Jove I'll box your ears."

Mr. Hartley Livingstone—I suppress the many maledictions that garished his conversation—was a man of his word. His hand was large and heavy, and Mrs. Armytage knew that the threat he had just uttered was not by any means a vain one. So she went up and kissed him, not reluctantly, and still not heartily, but with that calm and equable philosophy which was apparent in her private behaviour towards her papa.

"And now," the Governor resumed, a thorough reconciliation having been effected, "to business. How stands the money-market, my duck of diamonds?"

"Ready money, ready money, nothing but ready money," answered Mrs. Armytage, in a vexed tone. "The business we are carrying on is too large a one. We have too many irons in the fire, father, and we shall be broken for the want of ready money."

"I don't see how that can be. We've two capital strings to our bow. There's Sir Jasper Goldthorpe as good as the dividends on Plough Monday. If ever we want to kill the goose for its golden eggs, you can drive down to Beryl Court, and give the old gentleman a receipt in full for ten thousand down. Why, he's got millions!"

"I don't know. I'm nervous; I'm anxious about Sir Jasper. His life hangs on a thread, and were he to die, we could prove nothing. Besides, when I saw him last, he seemed *géné* and embarrassed, and spoke of the scarcity of money."

"Surely he can't be travelling to Queer Street. Where did you see him last?"

"In Paris."

"Has he come back to England yet?"

"He returns to-day. He is to bring that Magdalen Hill up from Swordsley, and there are to be grand doings again in Onyx Square."

"And the young fellow?"

"What young fellow?" and Florence Armytage first flushed crimson, and then turned deadly pale.

"There, I don't want to interfere in your little love-affairs, my dear. They're expensive; but they give you pleasure, and they don't concern me."

"They give me the pleasure of revenge," Mrs. Armytage said slowly; "of revenge the most signal, the most crushing, and yet the most secret, over one that I love and one that I hate more than ever man or woman was hated on this side the plains of heaven or the sulphur of the bottomless pit."

"You are poetical, my child. Have your own way. It has cost you a good many hundred pounds since last January twelvemonths; but you know your own affairs best. The young fellow I spoke of is the soldier-officer—the dragoon Goldthorpe."

"Poor Willy!" replied Mrs. Armytage, with a look of relief, "he is desperately dipped, I fear. His father is angry with him. Even Sims won't lend him any more money."

"That's bad; when that old rat deserts a ship, it must be sinking indeed. Are there any manufactured articles, ho, ho! of ours, my dear, about with the Captain's signature to them?"

"A few."

"Figure?"

"Three or four hundred pounds."

"Is he likely to pay?"

"There is a talk of his compounding with his creditors; and Sims is to have the management of the affair."

"Then our little manufactured articles can be lumped in with the rest, and Sims must go snacks. I dare say the Captain won't holloa. He's been giving blank acceptances for the last two years, and I dare say he doesn't know his own golden signature from the manufactured article—from the Sheffield plate, my dear. Ho, ho!"

It had grown dark by this time, and Mr. Livingstone, having carefully drawn the curtains, lighted a pair of wax-candles.

"I'm growing deuced weary of this confinement," he said, yawning and stretching his great arms. "For eleven months I've never stirred out of this doghole of a house; for eleven months I've been acting a part like Mr. Farren in the play; for eleven months I've borne all the extortions of that foul old hag down-stairs. But your father's got patience, Florence, and he knows that it'll all come right at last, and that he'll win the big stake."

He began walking to and fro in the room, but cautiously used a stick, and stumped it now and then on the carpet, lest those below should wonder at so firm and ponderous a footstep.

"Irons in the fire!" he continued to himself. "Dick Livingstone's got half a dozen, nearly red-hot by this time. There's the gold, Florence, there's the gold!"

"Do you still think the enterprise will succeed?"

"Think! I'm sure of it. Grindle, and Naylor, and Everest are all good men and true. They must get it; and if between this and next November we don't have twenty thousand pounds' worth of bright red gold in dust, ingots, Mexican doubloons, and Russian pauls, there isn't such a thing as the Great Eastern Railway in England, and I'm a Dutchman."

"It's weary work."

"It's safer than your little game, my dear. Your father helps you in it, because he writes a neat hand, and you're fond of seeing his little pothooks and hangers. Ho, ho! And it certainly brings in ready money; but it's dangerous, Florence. What was it the little boy confessed when his papa's house had been burnt down? 'Last night I played with Tommy lighting straws.' Wasn't that it? You're always playing

with Tommy lighting straws, and if you don't take care, the house will be all in a blaze some of these fine days."

"I know it, I know it," Mrs. Armytage exclaimed; "Sims has told me so over and over again. I would give it up, but it brings in the ready money of which we stand so much in need."

"Exactly so; and so long as we are so very gay, and so very fashionable, and spend such quantities of money on our little fancies, the ready money will be required."

"You can spend some yourself, father, if you please."

"Yes, I can get rid of any amount, although I never stir beyond the walls of this house. Your papa's a scientific inventor, my dear. Hasn't he laid out large sums in the perfection of a little machine the results of which, some of these days, will rather astonish the Governor and Company of the Bank of England? Hasn't he his engravers and his paper-makers at work at half a dozen places, and even beyond sea? Then there's the little letter-of-credit concern. That costs money, my child; but it will bring in thousands before you are two years older. And, last of all, isn't there this? isn't there the laboratory? Where's a greater alchemist to be found than your fond father? Ho, ho! I want to find more than the Philosopher's Stone, more than the Elixir of Life. I want the Elixir of Death, my Florence."

The ruffian turned a key in a lock, and flung open the door of what had originally been intended for a dressing-closet. He took one of the candles from the table, and, holding it over his head, looked exultingly into his laboratory. There were many shelves within it laden with jars and phials full of variously-coloured liquids. There was a still. There was even a little furnace with a flue that went up the chimney. There were glass rods, and steel pincers, many bunches of herbs and bundles of roots hanging from nails on the walls, and a well-thumbed volume or two.

"It's all here, it's all here," Hartley, alias Dick, Livingstone repeated; "but it wants bringing out; it wants trying by the level and the square."

He took a phial from the shelf, and held it to the light.

"There's death in this," he said, "sure enough; but it's the death I don't want. It's death with agony, with convulsions, with grinding, and foaming, and writhing, and stiffening into the shape of a half moon. There's death in that blue bottle, in that red one; in this black stick of Cavendish, in that gray powder; but they're all no good to me. I don't want any colour in my elixir, I don't want any smell, I don't want any taste, nor any nasty preparations that make people pull ugly faces, and turn them livid and swollen when the job is done. No, no. I want the real elixir, the genuine article, the universal cure-all; and I'll find it out, if I blow the roof of this house off."

"I wonder where it will all end?" Mrs. Armytage murmured half to herself, and tapping one foot on the carpet.

"End!" echoed the ruffian, replacing the phial on its shelf, and set-

ting down the candle. "Where should it all end but in success and in riches? You little peddling rogue, you, with your twopenny-halfpenny rascalities, I go in for thousands! I want men's lives to be of no more account to me than those of sheep with the rot! I'll rot 'em—I'll warm 'em!"

"Is it necessary?"

"Ay; it is. You'd like to kill somebody, wouldn't you? You'd like me to cheat Magdalen Hill out of her fortune, and then have her life, wouldn't you? All shall be done. All we want to do shall be effected. Leave your father alone. He's going to make your fortune. You shall marry a duke; and, by jingo, the money we'll make shall turn me into a Man again; shall give me one real name instead of half a dozen aliases; shall sink and burn the memory of the convict who ran into the bush from Hobart Town, and who, ho, ho, ho! was supposed to have been murdered by the natives. Many a time have I talked with Hugh Desborough about it. He was my mate in the chain-gang, Flo. I wonder what's become of him? I wonder whether your friend Mr. Sims knows any thing about him? By your account he seems to know every thing. I should like to have a word with that Mr. Sims. We might work together."

"I think you are better apart," his daughter observed. "You are too desperate in your speculations for him, father. Sims is always on the safe side. Heigho!" she added, "I wish I were; but I'm in the labyrinth, and must grope my way about as best I can."

She rose to go, and held up her face to the ruffian to be kissed again.

"Can I do any thing more for you, my darling?" he asked.

"Stay!" she exclaimed hastily, "you can. I had forgotten. Here are half a dozen signatures to be written. I must have the money by Tuesday next. It is the eve of the Derby Day."

"What! have you made a book?" asked Livingstone, as he received an oblong packet of papers from her, and began to look over them.

"Never mind. I must have the money, that's enough. I have only given you signatures that are beyond my powers. Tibby and Chatwynd I could never manage. Lord Fortyscore's original you have. I will come for them in the course of to-morrow. Good-night, father."

"Good-night, my chickabiddy," the urbane Governor replied, once more kissing his daughter. "Good-night, and God bless you." Yes, he bade God bless her, he did—this ruffian.

Mrs. Armytage took a cab to her grand furnished apartments at Albert Gate. As she alighted from the vehicle and stood on the door-step, some large drops of rain began to patter on the pavement.

"It will rain in torrents before morning," she thought. "I've often wished that a Deluge might come to drown all us wicked people in a heap. It would be better, perhaps."

Perhaps. The rain did fall in torrents within an hour's time. Was there indeed a Deluge coming, in which all the wicked people were to be submerged, and only the Just saved?

There are those who will read these sheets, and who, wading through the Slough of villanous Despond which the chronicler has mapped out, may cry "absurd!" "improbable!" "preposterous!" and "impossible!" when they take note of the characters and weigh the incidents in this story. The cry would be, at best, but a parrot one, which I have heard five hundred times. When we have not seen, and when we do not know, things, there is nothing easier than to doubt their probability, or even to deny their existence. Not later than yesterday I heard an ass question whether Richard Burton ever went to Mecca or to the Mormon country; and another, more malevolent, ascribe to M. Du Chaillu the exuberant imaginativeness of Baron Munchausen. I dare say that few persons find any thing astonishing in the wealth of my Sir Jasper Goldthorpe, in the good-humour and vulgarity of his wife, in the self-possessed reticence of Miss Magdalen Hill, in the politeness of Dr. Sardonix, or in the easy profligacy of the Captain of Dragoons. There are things which we see every day, and with which we are all familiar. To be told what we know flatters our sense of self-esteem, and makes us think what clever fellows we are: it is when we are told that of which we had previously no knowledge that we begin to sneer our "oh, indeeds!" and resent, as an impertinence, information which, from want of evidence, we reject at once as untrustworthy. There is my Miss Salusbury, for instance. The majority of my female friends are enraged at the portraiture given of that young lady. They declare that a nobleman's daughter who swears, who bets, who reads *Bell's Life*, and who talks slang, is a monstrous impossibility. I can only shrug my shoulders, and say that I have known the Honourable Letitia Salusbury in the flesh. So with Mrs. Armytage. I grant that she is an uncommon specimen of wickedness; but only last Sunday I dined with a friend who knew her, her face, her ringlets, her wiles, her thefts, and her forgeries by heart; only, you see, her name was not Armytage, but something else. Are you to stigmatise Mr. Sims, again, as an overdrawn character, because you never met him? For the reason that you never boarded at Mrs. Cæsar Donkin's, are you to deny the verisemblance of the witch of Bergen-op-Zoom Terrace? Finally, because you were never cheated or poisoned by a returned convict disguised as an invalid dotard, are you, with impunity, to asseverate that the picture of Mr. Hartley Livingstone is grossly overcharged? Bah! I tell you that I have known these people, and they must play their several parts round the shrine of Mammon until that Deluge which threatens them all arrives.

François Rabelais.

BY JOHN OXENFORD.

TOWARDS the middle of that stormy sixteenth century, which stands as the period of rough transition from the mediæval to modern life; at the time when Protestantism was a new thing, and the first appearance of Martin Luther could be recollected with a slighter effort of memory than is now required to recall the passing of the English Reform Bill; when Calvin was a young man, anxious to vindicate the French Huguenots, and to prove that they were not a set of disreputable marauders like the disciples of John of Leyden; when the torch of religious discord—now a mere candle, by which, if we please, we may read controversial pamphlets at our leisure—was setting fire to human habitations, and burning susceptible human bodies; when politics were in such a topsy-turvy condition that a sovereign, who with pious severity sent his heretical subjects to the stake, could unblushingly seek the alliance of the Grand Turk or an Algerian corsair to aid him in repressing a brother bigot; when a general conviction was forcing itself upon mankind that many false gods had been worshipped, and that reforms were needed, not only in religion, but in law, in science, in education, in every thing; when the ancient classics were revered by the highest intellects as the source whence new light was to be revived, while they were regarded with shrinking apprehension by the worshipers of old institutions; when the whole civilised world presented a spectacle of internecine contests, in which the combatants were terribly earnest;—towards the middle of that stormy sixteenth century arose a man, who with a comprehensive glance could take in all its tendencies, and greet them with a laugh, so hearty, so reckless, and so loud, that its echo continues to the present day. That man was the famed Curé of Meudon, François Rabelais.

Though he stood as a comic figure in an age of the most serious collisions, Rabelais perfectly reflected all the tendencies by which he was surrounded. A relentless assailant of the monastic institutions, he merits a high place among the workers of the Reformation, though his own character seems to have had much in common with that of the dissolute friars, whose vices were so severely lashed by the Protestant leaders. Learned, in the strictest sense of the word, and deeply imbued with a reverence for classical erudition, he was a worthy contemporary of Erasmus, a distinguished citizen of that republic of letters, which was then no mere abstraction, and was therefore respected by those magnates of the Church, who valued wit and intellectual cultivation more than orthodoxy of doctrine. His study of medicine appears to have been so serious, and so much distinguished by a desire to introduce new light in the place of traditional darkness, that if fate had not marked him out for a satirist, he would probably have

gained a name among the early reformers of science. There was nothing like ignorance in the laugh of Rabelais, none of that shallowness which was common among the scoffers of the last century. What he laughed at he thoroughly understood; by no means an ordinary qualification among professional jesters.

Had he been less exuberant in his wit, Rabelais might easily have been a pedant; but so unfettered was his power of combination, so luxuriant was his fancy, so buoyant was his natural gaiety, that with him pedantry was impossible. By virtue of some assimilating process, his erudition furnished the aliment by which his wit was fed and invigorated; and he lightly carried his weight of learning, wielding it at his ease, like a fool's bauble. Scraps of the most varied learning, fragments of science, particles of monkish lore, all fell naturally into the service of "fun," and floated along, without difficulty or impediment, in the company of popular proverbs, local allusions, and original conceits. The most diverse thoughts were connected by an inscrutable law of association; and within the compass of a single page a whole labyrinth of notions were threaded with facility.

An extract from the discourse of Gargantua's friends, when they "chirped over their cups," will serve to show Rabelais in his most unbridled humour. We give it, after the version of Sir Thomas Urquhart:

"What difference is there between a bottle and a flagon? Great difference; for the bottle is stopped, and shut up with a stopper, but the flagon with a vice. Bravely and well played upon the words! Our fathers drank lustily, and emptied their cans. Here is one going to wash the tripes. I drink no more than a sponge. I drink like a Templar Knight. And I, *tanquam sponsus*. And I, *sicut terra sine aqua*. Give me a synonym for a gammon of bacon. It is the impulsory of drinkers. It is a pulley. By a pulley ripe wine is let down into the cellar, and by a gammon into the stomach. Hey! now, boys; some drink, some drink. There is no trouble in it. *Respice personam, pone pro duo, bus non est in-usu*. If I could get up as I could swallow down, I had been long ere now very high in the air.

'Thus became Tom Tossopot rich,
Thus went in the tailor's stitch,
Thus did Bacchus conquer Inde,
Thus philosophy Melinde.'

"Here, Page, fill! I prithee, and I will write the election I have made of thee into the very register of my heart. Sup, Guillot, and spare not; there is somewhat in the pot. I appeal from thirst, and disdain its jurisdiction. Page, sue out my appeal in form. This remnant in the bottom of the glass must follow its leader. I was wont heretofore to drink out all, but now I leave nothing. Let us not make too much haste; it is requisite we carry all along with us. Hey day, here are tripes fit for our sport, and, in earnest, excellent gode billios of the dun

ox (you know) with the black streak. Oh, for heaven's sake, let us lash them soundly but thriftily. Drink, or I will—no, no, drink, I beseech you. Sparrows will not drink unless you bob them in the tail; nor can I drink if I be not fairly spoken to. There is not a crevice in my body where this wine doth not ferret out thirst. Ho, this will bury it soundly. But this shall banish it utterly," &c.

We may observe, by way of digression, that Sir Thomas Urquhart's translation of Rabelais is one of the most marvellous books in the English language. So thoroughly did the ingenious Scot enter into the spirit of the reckless Frenchman, that one is almost tempted to regard the wit and the translator as a pair of "Corsican Brothers." Odd, coarse, and dirty as the expressions of the pious Curé might be, Sir Thomas, with patriotic zeal, was determined to show that an idiomatic Englishman was not to be outdone in filthiness by the filthiest of foreigners. And this zeal, coupled with a laudable desire to be as faithful as possible, led him to explore with wonderful minuteness the least reputable nooks of our language. A Billingsgate fishwoman is conventionally assumed to be an accomplished mistress of the art of vituperation; but her vocabulary would be utterly exhausted before she even approached the rich store of abuse which (following Rabelais) Sir Thomas Urquhart puts into the mouth of the bakers of Lerné when they refuse to sell their cakes to the subjects of Gargantua.

"The cake-makers were in nothing inclinable to their request, but (which was worse) did injure them most outrageously, calling them prattling gobblers, licorous gluttons, freckled bittors, mangy rascals, drunken roysters, sly knaves, drowsy loiterers, slapsauce fellows, slabberdegullion druggets, lubbardly louts, cozening foxes, ruffian rogues, paltry customers, sycophant varlets, draw-latch hoydons, flouting milksops, jeering companions, staring clowns, forlorn snakes, ninny lobcocks, scurvy sneaksbies, fondling fops, base loons, saucy coxcombs, idle luskas, scoffing braggards, noddy meacocks, blockish grutnols, doddipol jolt-heads, jobbernot goose-caps, foolish loggerheads, flutch calf-lollies, grout-head gnat-snappers, lob-dotterels, gaping changelings, codshead loobies, woodcock slangams, minnie-hammer fly-catchers, noddiepeak simpletons, and other such-like defamatory epithets."

We have given the speech expurgated of divers expressions that are offensive not only to ears polite, but to common decency. And here let us remark, that the filthiness of Rabelais is something absolutely terrific, —something to which a match cannot be found in the works of any author of literary repute, except in isolated passages of Aristophanes, or in certain pieces of the more licentious Roman poets. However, even the free-spoken ancients can be castigated (with the exception of Petronius Arbitrator), and can thus be rendered at any rate admissible to the topmost shelf of a library; whereas Rabelais presents us with a course of solid nastiness that absolutely prohibits his visible admission into the house of any respectable family. Expurgation in his case would be

synonymous with annihilation, and the enthusiast who handled him in a Bowdler spirit would soon reduce him to the condition of that footless stocking without a leg, which the Yankee regarded as the fittest symbol of nonentity. In the windows of those shops which constantly provoke the vigilance of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, the portrait of the clerical ribald frequently holds a conspicuous place, as if he were the patron-saint of the abominable establishment. If the English paterfamilias happens to be a devotee to literary celebrities, and *must* have a Rabelais in his possession at any risk, let him place the *liber prohibitus* not only on his least accessible bookshelf, but let him wall it in with a solid row of the most respectable and untempting volumes that he can find in his collection, and always insist on dusting his own shelves. A still safer method is to keep none but a French Rabelais in one's domicile; for the difficulty of the language is sufficient to quench the curiosity of the most daring Columbus. The only fault in this plan is, that the work of Rabelais will be just as unintelligible to paterfamilias himself as to the younger members of his household, unless, indeed, he has been a special student of the old Gallic tongue.

Nevertheless, in spite of that unbridled freedom of speech which has raised a perpetual bar between the history of Pantagruel and the merely general reader, it cannot be said that Rabelais was an immoral writer. He neither panders to impure passions, nor takes a morbid pleasure in deliberately exhibiting the infirmities of human nature. Like those gentlemen of the old school whose conversation became exceedingly free after dinner, he seems to say whatever comes uppermost; and as much dirt lies on the surface, the discourse is necessarily obscene. It may be observed, by the way, that the character he assumes when he addresses his readers is that of a professed toper, who derives all his inspiration from the bottle, and claims to be regarded as a boon-companion.

"The fragrant odour of the wine,—oh, how much more dainty, pleasant, laughing, celestial, and delicious it is than the smell of oil! and I will glory as much when it is said of me, that I have spent more on wine than on oil, as did Demosthenes when it was told him that his expense on oil was greater than on wine. I truly hold it for an honour and praise to be called and reputed a Bon Gaultier and a Robin Goodfellow; for under this name am I welcome in all choice companies of Pantagruelists. It was upbraided to Demosthenes, by an envious, surly knave, that his victims did smell like the wrapper of a foul and filthy oil-vessel. For this cause interpret you all my deeds and sayings in the perfectest sense; reverence the cheese-like brain that feeds you with these fine billeezees and trifling jollities, and do what lies in you to keep me always merry. Be frolic now, my lads. Cheer up your hearts, and joyfully read the wit with all the ease of your body and the profit of your reins. But hearken, joltheads, you viedazes, or dickens take ye, remember to drink a health to me for the favour again, and I will pledge you instantly."

Thus concludes the preface, or, as he calls it, the prologue, to his eccentric work.

In spite of the frolic humour which in the above passage he openly professes, and which appears through the greater portion of his writings, there is not the slightest doubt that he often contemplated a very earnest purpose. He was seriously disgusted with the gross ignorance and superstition which prevailed under the influence of illiterate monks, and the obstacles they presented to the newly-commenced march of intellect. Perfectly free from that general scepticism which strikes at the root of social existence, and which makes Montaigne, notwithstanding his religious and political conservatism, one of the most dangerous of authors, he occasionally rises into a tone of the loftiest morality, and he may undoubtedly be regarded as a jealous champion for the dignity of human nature. When Coleridge declared that he could write a treatise in praise of the moral elevation of Rabelais' works, "which would make the Church stare and the conventicle groan, and yet would be true, and nothing but the truth," there is no doubt that he suggested a task which even a much less profound thinker than himself could have performed with perfect success. Claiming concession for a writer who was under the influence of an age of the most unblushing licentiousness, we would much rather undertake to defend the history of Pantagruel than the *Essays* of Montaigne, or the "*Provincial Letters*" of Pascal. But when Coleridge says that the buffoonery of Rabelais was "not merely Brutus's rough stick, which contained a rod of gold;" and that "the caricature of his filth and zanyism show how fully he both knew and felt the danger in which he stood," thereby implying that the said buffoonery was merely a mask, which the satirist unwillingly put on to conceal the earnestness of his purpose,—we are compelled to withhold our assent, convinced that the tom-foolery of Rabelais was as much a part of himself as his hatred of darkness and hypocrisy. If he heartily loved truth, he loved nonsense also, and never more thoroughly enjoyed himself than when he gave vent to a long string of absurdity, with lordly disregard of every law of reason, common sense, and decorum.

To defend Rabelais against the charge of profanity would not be so easy. Sometimes in his serious mood he recommends the study of the Scriptures in a manner which would show a leaning towards Protestantism, similar to that which is found in Erasmus; and there is no doubt that in his mind, as in that of many of the leading reformers, the diffusion of biblical knowledge was closely associated with the extension of classical erudition. But the levity with which he alludes to subjects of the most awful sanctity must have rendered him seriously distasteful to the really religious of every party; and the "*hypocrites of Geneva*" by no means escaped his lash. Thus we can perfectly understand the remark of Etienne (Stephanus) the printer, who stood high among the learned Protestants, and observed, "Though Rabelais does seem to be on our side, he is always flinging stones into our garden." A theory that

Rabelais founded a sect called the "Pantagruelists," with the object of diffusing Calvinism among the illiterate, while the cultivated members were to be polished Epicureans, is by no means to be dismissed with contempt. In the description of the imaginary Abbey of Theleme, founded by Gargantua's father, much may be said in favour of this supposition. On the great gate of this institution stands an inscription, declaring that religious hypocrites and sharking attorneys are excluded; while a curious assemblage of fine gentlemen and faithful expositors of the Scriptures is thus urgently invited:

"Here enter you, and welcome from our hearts,
 All noble sparks endow'd with gallant parts.
 This is the glorious place, which hourly shall
 Afford wherewith to entertain you all.
 Were you a thousand, here you shall not want
 For any thing; for what you ask we'll grant.
 Stay here, you lively, jolly, handsome, brisk,
 Gay, witty, frolic, cheerful, merry, frisk,
 Spruce, jocund, courteous furtherers of trades,
 And, in a word, all worthy gentle blades—
 Blades of heroic hearts—
 Shall taste here of the feasts,
 Both privily
 And civilly,
 Of the celestial guests.

Here enter you pure, honest, faithful, true
 Expounders of the Scriptures, old and new,
 Whose glasses do not blind our reason, but
 Make it to see the clearer, and who shut
 Its passages from hatred, avarice,
 Pride, factions, covenants, and all sort of vice.
 Come, settle here a charitable faith
 Which neighbourly affection nourisheth,
 And whose light chaseth all corruptions hence
 Of the blest Word from the aforesaid sense,—
 The Holy Sacred Word,—
 May it always afford
 T' us all in common,
 Both man and woman,
 A spiritual shield and sword,—
 The Holy Sacred Word."

Over this model abbey is placed Friar John, one of the most important personages in the story, and the *beau-ideal* of that sort of fighting, swearing, tippling monk of whom our own Friar Tuck is the popular type. Gibbon, in an anti-ecclesiastical spirit, declared that the virtues of the clergy were more to be dreaded than their vices; and Rabelais, in his anti-monastic humour, is evidently inclined to set down the openly profligate monk as the best of his class. Friar John is pronounced a "good fellow;" that is to say, he can drink more deeply and swear more atrociously than all the rest of his company, and is another Samson in the power of demolishing innumerable foes single-handed. According to some interpreters, Friar John is intended for Rabelais' noted patron Jean du Bellay; others see in him a representation of that Cardinal Chatillon who was so conspicuous

in the troubles of France; while a third party regards him as a representative of Martin Luther. But let us here advise our readers, once for all, to have nothing to do with those historical interpreters of Rabelais, who find in his strange chronicles a record of real events, and catalogue his grotesque figures with the names of the actual personages they are intended to signify. Two interpretations of this sort are prominent above the rest. According to one, the family of giants, who are the heroes of the tale, represent the royal house of France; according to the other, they are kings of Navarre; but from neither of these hypotheses has a satisfactory result been obtained, and at present we had better content ourselves with the belief that in the course of his story Rabelais trusted to the bent of his own humour, and that his satire is to be found rather in allusions and episodes than in the structure of his narrative.

The tale, moreover, is one of those mere threads upon which an author may string whatever notions come into his head, perfectly at liberty to halt, hurry, skip, dilate, or digress, as his caprice may prompt. The work was published at long intervals, amid the vicissitudes of an adventurous life, and its character changed as it progressed; a mysterious first part having perished altogether, unless, as some of the learned suppose, an old romance called *La Chronique Gargantuine*, which has recently been brought to notice, is to be ascribed to Rabelais, and regarded as the first manifestation of "Pantagruelism" to the astonished world. Of the books that now comprise the recognised works of Rabelais, the second was published before the first; so that it was not until the fame of Pantagruel was firmly established that the present history of his father Gargantua made its appearance.

The whole work, as it now stands, purports to be a chronicle of the deeds and prowesses of a family of royal giants, traceable in the direct line to the mighty antediluvians. Gargantua, the hero of the first book is the son of Grandgousier, a hearty old tippler, and his wife Gargamelle, being miraculously born from the ear of the latter. In his childhood he is a dirty, impudent, ill-conditioned brat, and the teachers, under whom he makes no progress, are intended to typify the bad system of education common in the time of Rabelais. Under the better system (described at great length) of a wise preceptor named Ponocrates, an amelioration takes place; and, for further improvement, Gargantua visits Paris, where he makes himself notorious by taking away the bells of Notre Dame, which, however, he honourably restores. During his absence a quarrel arises between his brother's shepherds and the cake-bakers of Lerne, which leads to an invasion of Grandgousier's land. The worthy giant does all he can to make peace with Picrochole, King of Lerne; but his pious efforts are merely rewarded with contumely, and Gargantua is accordingly summoned from Paris to assist his father. Ultimately the invader is defeated, Friar John of the Tunnels performing prodigies of valour in the service of Grandgousier. For this he is rewarded with the Abbey of Theleme, the ideal institution to which we referred above.

Far more important than Gargantua is his son Pantagruel, who makes his appearance in the second book, and remains on the scene till the end of the entire work. His mother, Badebec, dies in giving him birth, and, like his father, he is sent to Paris, where he makes the acquaintance of Panurge, a kind of vagabond scholar, who henceforth appears as the chief wit and jester of the story. A law-suit, in which both the contending parties talk whole pages of unmeaning nonsense, is decided by Pantagruel, and Panurge distinguishes himself by a victory over an English scholar, in a grand debate carried on by signs only. Wars at home cause Pantagruel to return to his father. His tutor, Epistemon, loses his head in battle; but it is replaced by Panurge, and the revived pedagogue gives an account of the other world, with which many readers may be familiar.

It is easy enough to perceive that the history of Pantagruel was intended as the beginning of a work, and that the present commencement, which contains the exploits of Gargantua, was the result of an after-thought. In outline the stories are similar almost to identity, and they have scarcely any thing in common with the *Chronique Gargantuine*, which is a tale of the court of King Arthur. We may easily suppose that Rabelais originally intended something like a monstrous tale of chivalry, and that he afterwards abandoned the design; of which, however, traces may still be found in the wondrous feats that are occasionally performed by his giants. Not only does Gargantua carry off the bells of Notre Dame, but he eats six pilgrims in a salad, and is not aware of the fact till one of them has struck his hollow tooth with a staff. Pantagruel covers a whole army with his tongue, and has within his mouth a country inhabited by people who are utterly ignorant of the world without. Of course, grave interpreters will consider that this love of the marvellous is a mask, wherewith, as with indecency, the author conceals his earnest intentions; but we think that the unbiased reader, who has no theory to found, will find in these wonders, and in the genial manner in which they are recounted, a new proof that Rabelais loved nonsense for its own sake.

The second book of the present work was published in 1533, when the author was about fifty years of age, and was soon followed by the first. Rabelais, while a monk, had been already notorious for the freedom of his opinions, if not for the laxity of his morals; and dread of a persecution seems to have prompted his departure from his native Poitou, and his sojourn at Montpellier, where he seriously devoted himself to that course of medical and anatomical study of which we have traces in the minuter description of wounds which, after the Homeric practice, he introduces into his battle-scenes. The satire conveyed in his story of Pantagruel seemed likely to increase his danger, and he was glad to escape to Italy when the fire of religious persecution reached its height in France. At Rome he had a powerful friend in Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, who was there on an embassy; and had he been merely charged with heresy, such was the anomalous condition of the age, he could not have

been safer than at the Papal Court. But his abandonment of the monastic habit involved the more serious offence of apostasy, and he therefore took advantage of his propinquity to the Pope to offer a petition, praying that he might be allowed to enter a Benedictine monastery and practise medicine.

When he returned to France, and, having taken his degree as doctor of medicine at Montpellier, began to practise at Paris, he was in a condition of comparative, though not of complete, security; for he had not complied with the conditions of the Pope's absolution, which had required the assumption of the Benedictine habit. There is reason to believe, however, that all was soon made right, even in this respect, and he might now have been completely safe, had not the third part of his work, which appeared about ten years after the preceding, drawn upon him a new storm. This book, in which Panurge is the principal figure, mainly consists of dissertations and disputes, chiefly arising from the jester's determination to take unto himself a wife. Every mode of divination is tried, members of every profession are consulted; and thus all vocations, temporal and spiritual, are mercilessly satirised. The king (Francis I.), who was amused by the book, refused indeed to sanction a prosecution menaced by the Sorbonne; but there was sufficient danger to necessitate another journey to Rome, and Rabelais did not return to France until he had secured the protection of Diana of Poitiers, mistress of Henry II., the son and successor of Francis.

When once more in his native country, he was appointed curé of Meudon, and published his fourth book. This is occupied with a voyage in search of the "holy bottle," in the course of which Pantagruel and his friends visit all sorts of imaginary countries, the satire now taking the shape of allegory. Thus, we have a land of Catchpoles, an island of meagre diet, inhabited by Lent; a "fierce island," inhabited by the Chitterlings, who hold fasting in abhorrence; an island of the Papefigues, who laugh at the Pope; and an island of the Papemanes, where he is devoutly worshipped. Another island is the residence of Gaster (the belly), who is described as the master of all the arts. In the fifth book, which was not published till after the death of the author, which took place in 1553, this voyage is continued, and the travellers arrive at a "Sounding Island," in which there is a perpetual ringing of bells, and in which the different ranks of the Catholic clergy are presented under the semblance of birds. Grippemenaud, Archduke of the furred cats, probably intended for the Inquisition, next appears in most terrible potency; and there is an antitype of Swift's Laputa, in the Kingdom of Entelechie, governed by Queen Quintessence. At last the bottle is reached, and the whole terminates with an apotheosis of the grape—the source whence the author's inspiration was ostensibly derived. The satire, as it has advanced, has increased in audacity, and in lieu of the sly hints with which the earlier books are interspersed, we have at last a series of attacks on the most venerated objects, scarcely disguised by a veil of transparent allegory.

The career of Rabelais, during the greater part of his long life, was tolerably "Bohemian;" but while curé of Meudon his conduct seems to have been unexceptionably reputable. He shunned all occasions of scandal, received with delight the visits of the learned, taught poor children to read and sing, and was highly attractive as a preacher. Whether the profane jests which he is said to have uttered on his death-bed have any foundation in fact it is hard to decide; but there is no doubt that he has shared the fate of other wits, and that much ribaldry has been fastened upon him of which he was entirely innocent.

Amy.

SUMMER.

Amy the beautiful leaned from the ledge
Of an oriel, snowy with clematis-bloom :
The south wind sighed through the river sedge.

Far off, the old sea's resonant boom
Rolled without cease under moon and stars—
Music weird of the midnight gloom.

The Giant of Night wore ruby Mars
As a gem on his finger. Hesper shone
Like a beacon over the mountain scaurs.

One amethyst gleam of the sunset gone
Touched the maiden's chesnut hair :
A coronal Summer had set thereon.

The wind's low whisper every where
Ran through the leaves with a rustle of life,
As I watched my Amy unaware ;

As rose in my heart the deep love-strife
For that sweet girl-blossom in clematis-snow,
To woo her and win her, a darling wife.

She passed from my sight. To the sea below,
Where, under the stars, it coiled and curled
In endless ebb and tremulous flow,

The restless pulse of a sleeping world,
I went, in the clutch of a sweet unrest,
And watched the banners of Night unfurled,

And the nebulae widen over the west.
With me went odour of clematis-musk,
And a vision of beauty Saxon-tressed

Haunted the depths of the mystic dusk ;
And a soft shy glance of a lustrous eye
Dwelt in my heart, as a gem in the husk

Of worthless earth. O musical sigh
Of the summer south wind, breathe thou sweet
On Amy, wandering under the sky :

And strew fresh blossoms at Amy's feet,
When deep in the moss the wind flowers lie,
And afar in the woodland glades we meet.

WINTER.

Ring merrily out the Sarum bells
O'er wild Wilts wolds o'erblown with snow,
Where the tyrant Spirit of Winter dwells.

But hotter than Summer my blood's free flow:
For the rich girl-blossom is plucked, is mine—
Mine through the valleys of earth to go.

Oh, now may I gaze in her deep gray eyne !
For Amy is mine, my own, my bride:
Her absolute beauty, her truth divine,—

Are they not mine? O moorlands wide,
Where the east wind, eddying fierce and swift,
Hurries the snow-storm's turbulent tide,

Piling it high in a perilous drift,—
Are ye not beautiful? Will there be aught
Sweeter when maidenly Spring shall lift

Her delicate foot in the woodlands, fraught
With colour and odour? Will there be
Sweeter musical cadence caught

By the wanderer's ear in the forest free,
When vernal rivulets ripple delight
By moss-grown boles of the old elm-tree

To the yellow star-clusters of primrose bright?
Oh, whence this magical golden haze,
This glamour that gladdens the snow-storm's flight,

This incense burning through wintry days
In my happy heart's strong altar-flame,
Sweeter than breath of a million Mays?

Only make answer with Amy's name—
Amy the beautiful. Verily this
Is the source whence the mystical glamour came—

A fairy fount in the clematis,
Whose icy waters, murmuring low,
None ever have known, none ever may kiss

But one—but I! whose amorous flow
On my long earth-travel I shall not miss
Till Death through the temple of Love shall go.

MORTIMER COLLINS.



My Aunt and I.

WE were always proud of having been what might be called an eccentric family,—in other words, a family possessed of some peculiarity rendering it conspicuous. During more than one generation our hair had been an object of universal envy, unrivalled as it was in profusion and beauty. After a while, this distinction became less observable; but we were still remarkable for size, and might easily (without fear of opposition) have claimed descent from the children of Anak. My great-grandmother, having given birth successively to thirteen sons, was laid in her gigantic grave; and my great-grandfather, after twenty years' separation, slept once more at her side, worn out, many said, by the exertions consequent upon bringing up so enormous a family. In spite of all his efforts, my ancestor's children were but slenderly provided for. They were well educated, and, had they been disposed, might doubtless have got on in life; but unfortunately industry does not seem to have been an item in their composition. A council was held, and a means of future existence discussed. Plan after plan was proposed, and rejected as involving too much trouble. At length a brilliant idea suggested itself,—Why not exhibit?

The proposal was adopted unanimously; and my grandfather, in right of his superiority both in age and stature, was inaugurated into the office of giant, and ranged over the country in a caravan, whereon was painted in huge letters, “Mr. Griffendale, the Wonder of the Age;” while his brethren preceded the equipage in couples, waking the echoes by a diversity of musical instruments. After many months of this desultory life, and meeting with more than one adventure by the way, the procession halted at W—, a small town in the heart of Somerset. In the immediate neighbourhood resided a young lady of diminutive stature, but ample means,—an orphan from her birth, and uncontrolled mistress of her actions. It so chanced that, returning from a hawking expedition, she passed through the town, and came straight upon the caravan sacred to Mr. Griffendale and his attractions. In a lonely country place, where each incident is viewed as an event, it is not difficult to believe that even the most meagre band of actors might be regarded as a powerful company. Miss Latone was seized with a desire to behold the “Wonder of the Age;” and discovering that a room had been engaged for “a limited number of nights,” wherein the said Wonder would sing, declaim, and in other ways render himself agreeable, the lady, arming herself with a chaperon, engaged two seats in a front row.

How it came to pass I cannot say. If I remember rightly, the chaperon had formerly known something of Mr. Griffendale deceased; whatever the cause, an immediate introduction was effected, which ended

in the heiress falling in love with my grandfather, and finally marrying him.

As a Benedict, Mr. Griffendale displayed even less energy than had marked his career as a bachelor. He quietly settled down upon his wife's property, spending the whole of and more than his income. The Latone property was not a cruise of oil. In sorrow, and with presentiments of evil, Mrs. Griffendale, in presenting Mr. Griffendale with twins, closed her eyes upon sublunary affairs. Mr. Griffendale paid a visit to the nursery, and looked, discontentedly enough, into each diminutive cradle. The family characteristic was no longer visible; both together might have made one not-to-be-ashamed-of child. But those little creatures, fough! to think such insignificant atoms should be engrafted on the family tree. Ah, well, never mind; he must make the best of it. After all, he could marry again—by and by, of course; at present it could hardly be expected of him, being in such deep grief.

So years stole on. The cradles disappeared from their accustomed spot, and in their place stood two chairs, liliputian also, but bearing evidence to the fact of their occupants' having made considerable progress in stature. Then these, in their turn, made way for the stiff unbacked forms, on which the youthful Jane and Matilda went through their allotted tasks. After a while other changes occurred: the nursery subsided into a morning-room, the governess into a companion, and the Misses Griffendale left off leading-strings.

About this time a visit was paid to Latone Manor by the brother next in age to my grandfather, and hitherto his favourite. There were other points of resemblance between them exclusive of family traits. Both were widowers, both had "overrun the constable;" but the younger had one advantage,—he was the father of a promising youth, who, if possessed of nothing else, inherited (O subject of envy!) the family proportions with the family name. For a long period harmony prevailed in the domestic circle; at length a wrong note was struck, and discord instantly arose. Symptoms of an attachment sprang up between Johnny Griffendale and his fair cousin Matilda. The parental heel was at once placed upon the sentiment. John Griffendale's fortune was to be made by marriage, as his father's and uncle's had been before him. It was to no purpose the young man pleaded health, energy, and a determination to fight his way. To push on in a profession required influence, connection,—and as to trade! *that* degradation at least was not in store, it was to be hoped.

In despair, John Griffendale turned to his uncle, but only to encounter still stronger opposition. In vain he besought or Matilda wept. She was by far the prettier of the sisters. Had his choice fallen upon Jane, things might have been viewed in a more favourable light; but the family funds were in no flourishing condition, and Matilda was its chief hope. She was much admired already; and an antique specimen of humanity, possessed of innumerable acres, an extensive liver complaint, and consider-

able property acquired in India, was evidently on the brink of matrimonial propositions. John Griffendale gave up pleading, and reëmbarked with his father for America: the vessel was wrecked, and all on board perished.

Matilda, always delicate, never recovered this loss. She lingered on until I came into the world; but ere I was old enough to know her, or return her warm caresses, the lips that had kissed mine so fondly were cold enough, and the gentle bosom where my tiny head had nestled throbbed no more. She was buried, as it became a Griffendale to be buried, in the family vault, in a coffin covered with velvet. Sleek and lovely horses bore along the hearse, from whose roof an abundance of jetty plumes nodded approvingly. Expense was not spared, though to meet it was a difficult matter, the Latone property being already mortgaged to the hilt.

Difficulties thickened, involving my grandfather in a web from which there was no escape; tighter and tighter its meshes closed around him, crippling him alike bodily and mentally. Strength and health failed; and I should have been thrown a helpless orphan on the wide world but for my Aunt Jane.

She was a little woman, the smallest, perhaps, of the whole Griffendale race, albeit possessed of a mind that was no puny one, and of an energy seldom surpassed. I do not know that she was affectionate; I do know she was not demonstrative. The husk was hard, and few there were who penetrated to the kernel. She showed little sympathy with the frail or the fallen, but she loved justice and hated cruelty. To act rightly, to fight, to conquer self, was the surest way to her heart. She was not what could have been termed a lovable person; I never heard that, in her youth, she had proved attractive to the opposite sex. She was left "badly off;" and poverty, allied to my Aunt Jane, lost nothing of its habitual *désagrémens*. Left to her own resources, Miss Griffendale quitted the country, and hired a very humble lodging in town, whither I too was conveyed. There she sat down to meditate; her meditations were not satisfactory, and, equipping herself in bonnet and shawl, she walked out into the street.

Modestly clothed in black, and presenting a complete contrast to her *entourage*, she passed quietly along, examining the shops, and pausing longest where scraps of paper in the windows indicated that employment might be obtained there. At length, as she was stopping at the door of a milliner's establishment, a carriage drove up to it, and out stepped a lady of refined appearance, but evidently in a most unrefined temper. Scarcely heeding what she did,—guided by fate perhaps,—Miss Griffendale followed her into the house, and, seating herself on a chair, was auditress to the following dialogue.

"The hat is detestable, Mrs. Burton, and impossible to wear. I have no wish to withdraw my custom, believe me; but unless something more human-looking can be manufactured by your people, you leave me no resource."

"Sorry indeed, my lady," said the person addressed, in a desponding tone. "If you could only *hint* how you would like it, be sure that —"

"Ah, there it is," was the querulous interruption, "if *I* would hint! But if the task of invention and arrangement be thrown on *me*, better avoid all this trouble, and turn milliner myself. However, to save words, to-morrow I *must* have some decent covering for my head."

Thereupon "my lady" departed; and Mrs. Burton, with a sigh of relief, coming towards my aunt, inquired her pleasure.

"My request is an extraordinary one," was the reply. "Give me plenty of straw, some of your softest gauzes and rarest flowers, and I will make a hat for that lady."

Mrs. Burton coloured and looked half-offended, half-uncertain what to say.

My aunt continued—"I am a stranger to you; I do not therefore ask you to put blind faith in me. Here (drawing forth her purse) is money to pay for all I want; merely promise me, in case you approve my handiwork and it gives satisfaction to your customer, to try me again."

That evening I sat wonderingly watching while my aunt commenced her novel occupation. At first numerous queer-looking articles were produced in paper, and moulded into shape on my head. At last the desired form was attained, and a fairy structure rose beneath her fingers, which more recent times have never (at least in my idea) seen excelled. Long previous to the appointed hour the task was accomplished; but my aunt would not, for all the world, have sallied forth before the moment named, punctuality being, in her estimation, one of the cardinal virtues.

The hat proved a complete success; and my aunt, satisfied with witnessing the triumph, had good sense enough to say nothing of her share in it, submitting to hear Mrs. Burton complimented as a person of exquisite taste, who had hitherto hid her light beneath a bushel, thereby making considerable advancement in that individual's good graces.

It only remains to add, that on that day the first stone of Miss Grifendale's fortune was laid. Orders flocked in, and she presently found herself able to place whatever value she pleased upon her inventions. A house was hired in the vicinity of Hanover Square, and she busily passed the hours within its walls.

To return to myself. In the midst of Aunt Jane's occupations, and in her busiest moments, she never neglected me. She in person superintended my studies, and when I grew older and went to school, only coming home for the holidays, she would examine me upon every point of education, and if she found me deficient or forgetful, I had cause to tremble in my shoes; but if, on the contrary, I had done well, I lacked neither encouragement nor reward.

"Boys will be boys," you know, dear reader, and I was no exception to the rule. During one of my vacations and the temporary absence of my relative, I made my way to the room where the eight young ladies privileged to carry out her ideas were assembled. Bent on mis-

chief, I first put every thing in disorder, and then launched forth into such a sea of anecdote and shoal-adventure, that all were soon clustered round in eager attention; so eager, that no one heard the approaching footsteps or saw the opening door. My aunt came slowly in, and walked deliberately to the centre of the group. Consternation was visible upon each countenance; you might have heard a pin drop. At length one bolder than the rest stood forward.

"If you please, ma'am, we have not been here long—a quarter of an hour at the very extreme."

"Eight quarters of an hour," said my aunt, "make two hours lost to me. Mr. Charles Griffendale, will you explain to what cause we are indebted for your presence here?"

How severe she looked! I feared to face her eye; but truth and justice demanded of me to take the whole blame upon myself, which I did at once, respectfully but firmly. Her brow relaxed something of its sternness.

"You have been much in fault, but you own it honestly; leave the room now, and let it be distinctly understood it is the last time you set foot in it."

I obeyed her sorrowfully, for among that bevy of youthful attractions was a certain Fanny Effingstone, the orphan-daughter of a country clergyman, and a great favourite with me. Pretty Fanny Effingstone, you were indeed dear to me as a sister! Whether Fanny dwelt as much on me I cannot say; but I fancy she must have given me a stray thought now and then, otherwise she would hardly have come so often to select books from the library at the very hour at which I was accustomed to repair thither.

One afternoon, when we thus met, I could not resist complaining of my solitude and my banishment from that fairy region wherein Fanny was one of the presiding genii. She spoke so kindly and regretfully on my account, that, yielding to an irresistible impulse, I put my arm round her waist. She looked half-pleased, half-sorrowful. What was to follow next? I verily think my lips must have been within an ace of her blooming cheek, when my aunt's voice sounded at my elbow. Fanny disappeared like lightning, and I was left alone to face the enemy. Grave indeed was the glance that encountered mine.

"Charles Griffendale, what were you doing here with Fanny Effingstone?"

A storm was gathering. I saw it, but there was no shelter near, and all to be done was to bear up against it stoutly. I had enough of my aunt about me also to abhor (even could it have availed me any thing) slyness or subterfuge; so I answered bravely,

"I am fond of Fanny Effingstone. I was talking to her without knowing you were there, and I meant to kiss her."

This reply satisfied my self-respect, and I felt nerved to endure whatever was to follow. To my surprise, Miss Griffendale seated herself, and, beckoning me towards her, placed her hand kindly on my shoulder.

"Charley, you are very young, and you have no mother. I have done my best to supply her place; so listen to me now as you would were I really that which I have only endeavoured to be. I have more than once noticed your predilection for Miss Effingstone; nor am I sorry for this opportunity of speaking to you about it. You are only a boy, and a boy's fancy is a very fleeting thing. As an old adage says, 'Lad's love is like a stick-fire,—soon out.' Fanny is some months younger than you, but her mind is beyond her age. She has few people on whom to bestow her affections, and is, on that account perhaps, more liable to part with them easily. You have your own path to clear in life, and she is utterly friendless and alone. It may be years and years—it will be, I hope—before you think of settling; and I trust that ere long Fanny may know the blessing of a good husband's care. Now all these reasonable wishes of mine may be defeated, if she attach herself to you. I am an old woman compared with you, child, and you should pay the more attention to what I say. When we middle-aged folks, for the sake of others, place our experience at their service, dragging it forth from the storehouse of memory, we do so with an effort recalling the time when it was laid up there—long and long ago, with much pain and, it may be, many tears."

Never had my aunt spoken so feelingly, never had I loved her so much. I drew nearer to her, and, putting my arms round her neck, bestowed upon her forehead the kiss intended for Fanny.

In a few days the vacation would be over. "I will see that poor girl once again," was my thought, "just to find out if she has been lectured too." But though I wandered all about the place, and waited even longer than was prudent at the door of the work-room, she was nowhere visible. The hours flew by; on the morrow I was to go back to my Alma Mater. As a last resource, I proceeded to my aunt's room, and, knocking for admittance, found myself once more alone with her. She was reading when I entered, but put aside her book directly. Hurriedly, almost too fast for comprehension, I blurted forth what I came to utter.

"Aunt, I am going to-morrow, and should like to bid good-by to every body. Where is Fanny Effingstone?"

Miss Griffendale, looking at me in a surprised manner, begged me to repeat what I had asked.

"I want to say good-by to Fanny."

"Fanny Effingstone," said my aunt slowly, "is—gone away."

With that she resumed her book, and I quitted the room. Two days afterwards I was deep in my studies, working away for the prize. It was the last half, and though for a week or two I felt spooney enough, it must be avowed that, what with *this* examination and *that*, games at football and matches at cricket, the remembrance of Fanny grew fainter and fainter in my mind.

School ended; I was indulged with three months of liberty, spent with

my aunt in travelling about England; for she had now established her position so thoroughly as to be only on view at certain seasons of the year. My holiday past, I was called upon to make choice of a career. I think I was about the first of the Griffendales who, if report speak truly, had no decided tendency—or, in other words, whose nature had not received a twist in some particular direction. I evinced no sign of genius, and, now that my wings were stretched, felt no irresistible impulse to fly in this direction or in that. The sea had not the charms for me it had for many boys. I saw in a sailor's life but a monotonous existence, consisting of running up and down ropes, sea-sickness, and an uncomfortable succession of storms and calms. For the Church I had no vocation; and for the Bar no influence—I might pass through life without a brief. Two things were left me,—medicine and trade. As a tradesman my aunt could be of essential service to me; as a tradesman I saw a better chance of becoming speedily independent. Shut your eyes and close your ears, reader, if you belong to that class which holds trade in contempt; or rather, shut the book and put aside this veritable history, until your views are altered—shall I say, enlarged? A tradesman I became, and, after serving the regular time as assistant, apprentice, or what you will, set up on my own account.

Just before this event occurred, I went, by invitation, to dine with Miss Jane Griffendale; the other guests were Mrs. Burton and a not very young man, whose conversation pleased me exceedingly. He was quiet and gentlemanly in his manners, and there was, moreover, an ease and knowledge of most things about him indicative, I thought, of wealth and leisure. When we were once more alone, I commenced praising him to my aunt.

“Yes,” she answered, “he is both good and sensible; a very suitable person for the husband of Fanny Effingstone. She would have been with us to night, only she could not leave her baby.”

Here was a blow—surely it half-stunned me? No, not at all. A few years before it would have made sad havoc in my youthful heart; but now, after the first spasm of disgust and—yes, I will own it—disappointment was over, I felt astonished at my own calmness; it was a leaf turned down in my life, that was all.

I began business for myself, and pushed my way. My aunt was not only clever in the invention of shapes and the arrangement of colours, but she was ever dreaming of fresh combinations of those colours themselves. Designs of all sorts flitted through her brain. These she described to me, and I, being ready with my pencil, gave them form, and then, after having them carried out by a manufacturer, reaped abundant profits therefrom. One day I had received the first piece of a lovely leopard-skin silk, of which she was in especial need; and wishing to hear from her lips how she approved the specimen, I set off for Hanover Street. It was many weeks since I had been there, but I knew myself to be ever a welcome guest; and passing without inquiry the servant

who answered my ring, knocked at the door of the room where Miss Griffendale was usually located. Receiving no answer, I went upstairs to her own peculiar quarter. She was not there either; so I made my way to a chamber which, opening out of her sleeping apartment, was not unfrequently employed as a study or *sanctum sanctorum*. To my surprise, the ordinary homely furniture was removed. In its place were hangings of delicate chintz, and a bed of the same material; while the innumerable articles of a lady's toilet were scattered about over the dressing-table. Having no desire to pry into my aunt's domestic arrangements, I closed the door, and, uncertain as to what further might await me, gave the silk in charge to one of her people, and descended to the drawing-room. Here was change again. The Holland coverings were removed from the chairs, while rare flowers bloomed in vases here and there. Nor was this all. On a sofa sat my aunt, and beside her one of the loveliest, most bewitching beings ever beheld. A form slight and fairy-like, complexion soft as ivory, eyes of the deepest gray, lips rosy and enticing, and hair of which a Griffendale might have been proud even in the olden times. My aunt smiled a welcome as she rose to receive me.

"Speak of the sun, and we see his rays. This is my Nephew Charley, who (turning to me) will be as glad as I was to make the acquaintance of Miss Mary Griffendale."

Explanations followed. This was a daughter of another branch of that strange family. Her father, having risen to eminence in the medical profession, had gone to Russia, where he was now appointed chief physician to the Emperor. Ill health had enabled him to obtain permission for a temporary absence in England. His daughter was the companion of his travels; and while he wandered the country through, my aunt undertook the care of Miss Griffendale.

She was an only child, an heiress, and her father's darling. At first I was almost disposed to envy her her advantages; when I knew her better, I thought no position equalled her merits. I had often read of love at first sight—*read* without *believing* in it. Whether the feeling that seized me now might have been so called I know not; if so, then what I had experienced for Fanny should either have had another epithet, or else love, like some Indian idols, is a many-sided Deity. I could have knelt at her feet, have worshiped her as superhuman. She seemed the embodiment of all artists had ever attempted to represent, or of which poets had dreamed. My head was absolutely dizzy, and I went away at last forgetting every thing else, my errand included. So much the better, it gave me an opportunity of speedily repeating my visit; indeed, as often as decency permitted was I to be found in Hanover Street. At first no notice was taken of my presence; besides I had always an excuse to offer,—either my aunt's directions had not been properly understood, or I was the bearer of some necessary article, too precious to be intrusted to a servant. At length this good but certainly trying Argus opened her eyes—one at a time. She did not see very clearly at first, unfortu-

nately not until the evil had reached its climax, and I was head over ears in love, no longer with the sentiment of a boy, but with the passion of a man. Meanwhile time crept on, and Mr. Griffendale came back to London. The period fixed for his absence had expired, and an imperial mandate commanded his return.

One evening, when I called, I stumbled upon a servant cording the Griffendale trunks. All was prepared for departure. I hurried on into the sitting-room. My aunt and Mr. Griffendale were talking by the window. The door opened, and Mary entered, bonnet on head, equipped for the journey. She was pale and agitated, trembling like an aspen-leaf. My aunt poured out a glass of wine. I, hardly knowing what I did, carried it to where she stood. She put out her hand as if to take it, turned very white, and fainted. The swoon was of long duration. Departure, on that day at least, was not to be thought of—not for long afterwards. Fever succeeded the fainting, and surely never did a more anxious trio count the tickings of the clock, or listen for the slightest movement in the sick-room. I was the least privileged of the party. Fully as anxious,—more so, if possible,—striving to hide that anxiety, unadmitted to the sacred precincts of her chamber, I could only hang on each uttered sentence, as if every word were my own death-warrant or reprieve. The crisis came—passed; she would recover. The father waited until she could be carried down and laid upon the sofa; then, unable longer to set authority at defiance, returned to Russia. Mary was to stay where she was until he could come back to fetch her; or, if well enough, was to be placed under the protection of certain friends who would travel northward ere many months elapsed.

This parting from her father had in a measure affected her health; but she quickly rallied, and her bloom began to return. As often as I dared would I sit beside her couch, reading to her, or conversing on subjects we had previously mutually studied. One night we had been talking in this way, when my aunt's voice interrupted us—harshly enough.

"Mary Griffendale, you are tired; let me help you to your room."

Mary, though she looked vexed, I could not but fancy made no objection; and, aided by my aunt, at once rose up from the couch. When they were gone I sauntered to the casement. It was a lovely evening; the sun had set, and the quiet planets came peeping out one by one. I smiled complacently at the scene; for a light, brighter than that of stars, was shining at my heart. This pleasant reverie was brought to an unexpected termination.

"Nephew Charles, I wish a few moments' conversation with you."

A disagreeable presentiment came across me—what had my aunt to say? I was not kept long in suspense.

"You are in love with Mary Griffendale."

I did not answer directly. I had never attempted the analysis of my feelings, though far from unconscious of their existence. Their sudden embodiment in a tangible form startled me. Involuntarily, within

myself, I repeated the words, "In love with Mary Griffendale!" and as often as I did so a voice somewhere seemed to say, "Well! what of that? Is she not in love with you? Can you deny the charge?" I could speak now.

"No, madam, nor have I any wish so to do."

"Then let me inquire in what this feeling is to end?"

"In the happiest of all results, aunt, provided at least I can obtain Miss Griffendale's consent—in marriage."

"That can never be."

"Why not?" abruptly.

"Listen, and I will tell you. Mary Griffendale is the daughter of a rich man, a man moving in high circles; you, though a gentleman in birth and thought, occupy the position of a tradesman here. More, Mary's hand is pledged to a Russian noble, her father's friend. Do not interrupt, but be patient, Charles. With my head full of your fancy for Fanny Effingstone, I too long closed my perceptions to this newer sentiment, otherwise it would have been nipped in the bud."

"On what grounds, I pray you?"

"On those already stated; in addition, on my own account. Mary is intrusted to my care; I am answerable for all that happens to her beneath my roof."

"Mary is not a child to be fettered. To-morrow we will put her to the test: if she love me, she will accept me, in spite of all the drawbacks you mention; if not, why, then—let her go."

I said this proudly, the more so as I felt buoyed up all the while by a conviction of my own security.

"Charley Griffendale, you must lay upon her no such trial. She *does* care for you, I feel sure of it; but her father's honour and peace of mind are dearer to her than her own happiness. I am not speaking unadvisedly; she has told me this herself."

"Ah! you have conversed upon these matters?"

"Yes, to-night. She hopes you have a regard for her—*hopes* without *knowing* it. She assures me that, as far as words go, nothing has ever passed between you. She has acted with a want of consideration (to use her own phrase), yielding herself up to the pleasure of the moment. Rouse yourself; conquer yourself. Give her no cause to think your feelings what they are. She will in time forget what she is now enduring, and all will be well."

"Madam, you demand too much. Once before you asked of me the sacrifice of a boyish affection; you now claim at my hands the resignation of hope—of happiness. I love this girl—love her, I tell you; yes, and will win her."

"Then I am as nothing to you," she said tremblingly, "I who have fostered you in my bosom as my own offspring."

"Neither you nor any one shall interfere in this business; I will be trifled with—ruled—no more."

There was silence in the room. Had she left me? I turned round—what to see?—Jane Griffendale kneeling at my feet. In an instant the remembrance of all that she had done for me swept through my mind. Her devoted love, her more than mother's care, my success in life, nay, even the very preservation of that life itself, might I not owe to her? It was a debt it behoved me to recall, though at whatever cost. I went to her; I raised her up; I felt the room swim round. Nature, love, manhood—all fought strongly within me. I must resolve at once. "You have conquered. Leave me."

I buried my face in my hands, and wept with that wild and bitter agony a weak nature never knows, which *any* nature can hardly sustain. How long I sat there I know not. Morning was breaking when I roused myself. Some one would be stirring soon. I must go now, if I meant to go at all—now, before there was a chance of seeing *her* again. A flower lay on the ground—a sprig of jasmine she had worn in her hair a few short hours since. I hid it in my bosom, and fled from the house. One little piece of revenge I could not deny myself. After placing my business in trustworthy hands, to be disposed of at the first desirable opportunity, I embarked for the Continent, without leaving any clue by which I might be traced. I was for many months, as disconsolate a lover as ever mistress could have desired. But (truth must be spoken) foreign scenes, a constant succession of events, the utter novelty of every thing around me, if it did not wear away, at least temporarily blunted, the edge of my grief. I made a tour through Italy, and then I came to Paris. On the Boulevards a child came running, and, not perceiving me, upset itself between my legs, fortunately without sustaining any injury beside the fright. It might as well have broken every rib in its body for the noise it made. A *bonne* hastened to its assistance, and a lady, emerging from a shop, inquired hurriedly what was the matter. In a second we had recognised each other, and I frankly extended my hand to Fanny Borodaile, *née* Effingstone; while she, with a more embarrassed air, but much perceptible pleasure, hastened to introduce me to her husband, the hero of my aunt's family-dinner. It did me good to see her so happy-looking, and to feel that we both retained something of our early affection, though neither was now the first object in life to the other. During some weeks we were constant companions, and I began to experience the value of true friendship, which, if it cannot boast all the *agrémens* of love, is at any rate denuded of its anxiety and bitterness. This was a gleam of sunshine; clouds were at hand.

Entering Mrs. Borodaile's rooms one morning, I found her absorbed in a letter, so absorbed that she did not hear my footsteps, and had not time to wipe the traces of tears from her face. When at length conscious of my presence, she breathlessly inquired what news I had from home.

"None," I replied, with some confusion; "I have stolen a march upon them, and no one knows exactly where to find me."

Bidding me prepare for a shock, she placed in my hands the paper

she had been reading, which proved a missive from Mrs. Burton. Miss Griffendale had had a stroke of paralysis. Penitent, conscience-stricken, I returned the letter, bade a hasty adieu to the Borodailes, and set out for England. Oh, how slowly the diligence moved! All would be over before I reached there, and then I could not help reflecting, "What if anxiety on my account had been one of the causes of this sudden seizure?" At last, arrived in London, I flew to Hanover Street. The blinds were down; I had hardly the heart to knock or ring. God was merciful; she was not dead, but sleeping, and knew me when she awoke. She was not alone either; a tender nurse smoothed her pillows, and the father, once more returned to England, offered the best of his medical knowledge—in vain. Blessing us all, and in my arms, my best and dearest friend passed away.

From her neck they removed a little ornament; it had evidently been worn for years, for the edges of the gold were quite rubbed out. It was a small locket-cross, with these words engraved upon it, "In memory of one beloved." Inside were the initials of my father's name, and a lock of hair precisely similar to that worn formerly by my mother, and then in my possession. What strange mystery did these words disclose? Was it sacrilege to a father's memory to think he had perhaps indulged in some soft passages with my Aunt Jane before his affections settled finally upon her sister? Was this the secret of her intense devotion to myself, of her sympathy in feelings she was not suspected to have ever known? I knelt beside her, and strove to hide the deep emotion that shook my frame.

"My daughter, comfort him," said a voice, and a soft hand twined itself in mine.

All had been made clear during that brief illness, and death having freed the Russian from his compact, no impediment was now placed in the way of my happiness—no impediment save one, the void that day made in my heart; a void which could never, *never* be replaced. And thus it is we approach, touch, possess, the very thing we covet, but neither at our own time, nor in our own way. So is it ever; and best it so should be, else were this earth our Heaven, and we incapable of casting a thought beyond.

American Hotels and American Food.

AN American hotel is to an English hotel what a seventy-four is to a jolly-boat, or, to borrow a simile from the immortal Tupper's *Ode to Chaos*, "an elephant is to a periwinkle." An American hotel would supply a regiment with beds. It is (in the chief cities) as large as any two of our club-houses fused together, as roomy as Buckingham Palace, and not much inferior to a palace in its internal fittings. It has ranges of drawing-rooms, suites of private rooms, vast staircases, and interminable layers of bedchambers.

As the American has hardly any resemblance to an Englishman, either in face, form, dress, food, government, views, or habit of thought, so likewise the New York hotel has not even the faintest resemblance to Mivart's, Long's, the Hummums, the Tavistock, or Wood's. It is not a costly, cozy, secretive place, with fat, velvet-footed waiters, but rather a vast caravanserai, where, for a certain fixed and immutable tariff price, the traveller, whoever he may be, has an indubitable right to a joint share in the use of a range of palatial rooms, the services of some thirty slave-waiters, four meals a day, and the enjoyment of a reading-room, a bar-room, and a telegraph-office.

But the reader will better understand the difference of the two if I first saturate him with systematically-arranged details of the way things go on at a first-class American hotel.

Let me lay the scene in New York—not at the Astor House, where princes and ambassadors once took their ease, because it is now a mere quiet second-class house; and not at the St. Nicholas, because that too has fallen into "the yellow leaf," and is become rather a rowdy-place, where revolvers occasionally go off in the billiard-room, and not always innocuously; nor in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, because that vast marble pile, that triple palace, is still rather an exceptional place, and prices are slightly dearer there—but in the New York or the Metropolitan, both good family houses, and both in Broadway, the fashionable centre of the Empire City.

I am just arrived in the city, say from the Sulphur springs, or from a pleasant scramble among the Catskill mountains, where the Dutch and Indian ghosts still play each other at bowls, especially in the rumbling summer thunder-weather. I feel quite glad to get back again to the breezy, bright-coloured city. The boats in the bay never looked so smart and swift to me, the Negro servants in the street never seemed so laughing and light-hearted, the last batch of Irish emigrants never so sturdy and hopeful. The Broadway is gay, too, with tremendous election-flags hung across the street; the liberty-poles are, if possible, more like dead May-poles than ever. I did not take a two-horse hack from the railway-station, because, in the first place, those cars are ruinously expen-

sive ; and secondly, because I hear that the carmen sometimes pull out a "sling-shot," and enforce undue fares from refractory strangers. Besides, I prefer to walk, for am I not here in the character of a sort of Latter-Day or "Brummagem" Columbus? and the streets are so gay, amusing, and pleasant, so full of life, yet not too crowded, so busy, yet not dirty. On American railways there is a perfect system of conveying luggage. The baggage-porter slips a brass ticket with a certain number on your luggage, and hands you the duplicate; without this being handed in, no one can receive your luggage; with it, no one can detain it. I have a black trunk, and I am 6543. I see my luggage at New York, and show my ticket; the porter takes the two tickets, and hands me the 6543 trunk.

"Where to, sir? 'Bus or car, ferry or hotel truck?"

I reply "truck." In a moment it is on the New York Hotel truck. The truck-master takes it, draws two brass tickets, tied by a thong, from a bunch of them which hangs on his arm; one (3421) he slips round the handle of my trunk, the other (3421) he gives me, to claim it by at the hotel in an hour's time; and I have no more to do now but go whither I will. If I were not to go to the New York Hotel for three weeks my trunk would be equally procurable on handing in my (3421) ticket. But I had forgot—I also this time (as the man is not a railway official) take his card, because I, and not the hotel, shall have to pay him; as, though he carries for the hotel, he is independent of it. If I wanted it taken quicker, I could have sent it for a few more cents by a trotting express wagon, a mere vermilion tray on wheels.

Within the hour (after a slight episode of oyster-soup) I arrive at the New York Hotel, whose splendid portal, fit for a nobleman's house, is on the upper left-hand side of Broadway, as you ascend from the City Park. There are a few gentlemen of dark complexion (Cuban planters, I afterwards find) smoking in rocking-chairs outside the door, in the open air, and inside the door more dark men, on settees on either side the entrance, discussing the new President, honest Abe Lincoln. The floor of the long entrance porch is paved with marble; and I can see, on either side, that it opens on luxuriously furnished reading and sitting rooms, also crowded by well-dressed gentlemen, wearing felt hats. No servant meets me; no one with cold, mechanical smile, and fawning treacherous eagerness, slides forward to take my coat, or show me a room. It is a humiliating and yet a certain fact, that no one seems to care "a red cent" whether I come or go.

At the end of the passage, to the right, I come (it is about eleven o'clock) to a large counter with stately desks and ledgers, enclosing a large room, as big as an ordinary London shop. Behind this stand three well-dressed but undemonstrative men, who consult the books, read the papers, count over dollars, and give orders to black servants, who bend to them in a tranquil way and listen. There are huge directories and railway-train bills on the counter.

Now were I not accustomed to the American system, I should, as an Englishman, feel "kinder riled" at the indifference of every one, at the unreadiness to supply me with a room, and to welcome me as an arrival, or as an incarnation of so many solid dollars. But as it is, and as I am not aristocratic in tendencies, I quietly rest my arm on the counter, and wait my turn till some anxious guests cease their inquiries; for I am in no hurry, want to hear what is to be heard, and it is still three hours to dinner.

One gentleman wants, I hear, a blank paper to put down his washing on; a second requests to be put down to be called for the first Boston train to-morrow morning; a third has left a coat in 364 that wants mending; a fourth is just off to England by steamer, and desires to pay his bill.

Now all these are cleared off, and even now, did I not speak, the quiet man at the desk would certainly not utter a word to me, not the least knowing, without being told, whether I have just arrived, or have been in the house six months; so I smooth my face to indifference, and quietly sign my name in the entry-book. The last name before me is,

"Colonel Crockett, from Salem, Mass;"

for an American always adds to the signature of his name the State he "hails" from. This entry—a sort of guarantee—is the first ceremony on entering an American hotel. The traveller is expected to write it as a matter of course; it saves talking, that's one thing. Directly I have done this, the clerk knows I am a new-comer and want a bedroom; so he goes to another book and asks a clerk what room is vacant, and then he goes to a large frame of hooks, and looks at the keys that are there,—the vacant numbers show the vacant rooms. Now he turns, and writes in the book opposite my name, "Solomon Psalmanazar, 314;" he then hands me the key of my room, on which hangs a brass label, inscribed 314. This I can either bring down daily when I go out, and give to the clerk to hang on the peg, or, if I dislike that trouble, I can keep the key perpetually in my pocket, just as I can at a French hotel.

Now I turn round to a row of black waiters, who sit sublimely indifferent, yet ready to obey the slightest gesture, on a bench which is placed against the wall. Sam springs forward and takes my key; I give him my luggage-ticket, and ask if the wagon has arrived. "This way, massa." I follow him into the great central hall, and there, in a corner, is my black trunk, standing forlornly among a tumbled heap of other luggage, of New Orleans chests, and rich planters' baggage—some just arrived, some just going off. I hand my ticket to the truck-master's boy; he sees the number is right, and gives my trunk to Sam to carry up-stairs before me. I ascend the stairs, and, on the first carpeted landing, see the entrances to luxurious sitting-rooms; on the second-floor the bedrooms begin, and here I find 314, the door of which Sam unlocks, and flings open with an air of royal hospitality; for the true Negro is always pompous, and is blessed with a cheerful self-conceit, that is the more

humorous the more it is developed. Sam rattles open the Venetian blinds, and calls the Irish chamber-maid, who has a duplicate key to every bedroom, to bring me water and soap and towels. Every thing is clean, and fit for use; as for the bed, it is white as a snow-drift, and the window of my room looks out on a sort of garden, with one or two "Pride of India" bushes in it, and a dusty magnolia bush.

Sam unstraps my portmanteau cover, gives me a bow, and retires—no, he has something to say. It is this: "'Appy to wait on massa while at 'otel. Which his name is Sam. When he want him, always ask for Sam—massa's servant. Want the *Herald* every morning, massa? bring him to de bedroom-door, which his name is Sam, reg'lar every morning." I order Sam to bring a copy of the *New York Herald* to my door every morning, and to order me a warm bath this evening. But here Sam reprovingly stoops to put me right. All orders about baths must be given down below in the office. And, with another smiling entreaty that I would not forget his name, Sam retires, and leaves me to prepare for dinner.

Now in all things, including dinner, the Americans are less luxurious, more simple and primitive in their habits than we are; they rise earlier, dine earlier, go to bed earlier; in fact, they live more as their Puritan ancestors did when they came over in the seventeenth century. Hotel dinners are in no part of America later than two, and where they are later there is generally a two-o'clock dinner as well. Tea at six, and supper at ten, I found universal at all the American hotels at which I stopped.

Presently the gong explodes, and at the signal some hundreds of keys click in the locks of some hundreds of bedroom-doors. Commercial men, dandies, planters, brides, old maids (necessity has no law,—driven by the same instinct, for hunger and death are common to king and rowdy) debouche on the dining-saloon. I descend, casting my eye as I pass on a large hat-stand, where my predecessors, I see, fling their hats, and I enter the room—the halting-place of the business man, the temple of the epicure.

But as the New York Hotel dinner was rather longer and more ceremonious, and in some respects exceptional, I will in preference describe the dinner at the Revere House, Boston, the very first house in all the United States, and the property of Paren Stevens, whom the Americans call "the Napoleon of hotel-keepers," and who is proprietor of three of the largest and best hotels in the States. At the Revere House the dinner is "going" from two to four. Suppose me just down from my bedroom, and seated at my usual table, the third from the door on the left-hand side of the room. It is usual, remember, for visitors to choose a particular seat, and to have a particular waiter.

My table holds some five others, two of whom have already begun dinner, and are well through their soup. My waiter, without asking me, instantly brings me a large caraffe half filled with glistening ice, and brims

it with water. He then hands me the bill of fare for the day, in which the names of dishes are arranged in sequence. The soups first, then the fish, then the entremets, then the roast and boiled, and lastly the pastry and dessert.

The soups are nearly all French or English, and I find in the list only my old friends gravy, oxtail, vermicelli, and so on. But stop! here is a new one—Gumbo soup, the favourite New Orleans soup, made with glutinous vegetables and green peppers, a very savoury and excellent dish. Dear me, how quick the people opposite spoon up their soup!—they surely must have been in that great army of Xerxes that drank up whole rivers at one night's bivouac.

The fish comes next. Here there is a wide choice; for the American fish, though, I think, rather insipid, is very varied and fine. The larger Spanish mackerel is coarse, but good. Then there is the Bass, the White Fish, and the "sheep's head," that savoury inhabitant of the Potomac that Washington must so often have partaken of. Further South there are rock-fish and groupers, enormous stewed oysters and clams. Yet, I cannot say I think the Americans cook fish very well, for it is always sodden and insipid,—at least at hotels, where they use steam-ranges; and besides I like to see the whole fish part of which I am eating, so as to think about it, and not to be served with strips and shavings.

But after all the semi-French cooking, and the want of honest roast and boiled, the peculiar and unmatchable superiority of the American dinner consists in the vegetables, of which there is an endless variety, and most of which are fine, quick-grown, and luxuriant in size. The egg-plant cut in slices and roasted is not to be despised. The "squash" or pumpkin is very nutritious and good. The yams deserve a sentence to themselves. They are something between a potato and a parsnip; they have a stringy soft brown peel, and their mashy and sweet taste is to me very unpleasant, though I could soon learn to like them. The Lima beans, too, are another favourite vegetable at American dinners; they are brought up peeled, are soft and white, and very succulent and pleasant to taste. Nor must Succotash be forgotten; nor the inestimable Indian corn, with its large bearded cobs, the sickly smell of which is to the stranger at first so unpleasant. It is brought to table in the full-head, and you strip down the cob with your knife or your teeth, whichever you prefer. It used to rather give me a shudder to see American ladies take up in their hands one of these heads of corn, as large round as a cucumber, and strip it down with their teeth as you would strip the currants off the branch of a currant-tree. Having stripped them, you dip them in melted butter, and so make an end. For myself I prefer the green or unripe corn, which is more tender.

But my great glory was the old Indian staple, hominy. This is ripe Indian corn which has been steeped in lye, and so deprived of its tough yellow outer cuticle. It is served up boiled into a fine-grained mass, as

white and delicious as rice, yet with a flavour, lightness, and sweetness peculiarly its own. There is no article of American diet I still daily long for more than this; for it is more digestible than the potato, and it never seems to surfeit or cloy. The Americans eat it in enormous quantities at breakfast, and at almost every other meal. As an article of diet for children it cannot be surpassed; for if they once get fond of it, they will almost live on it alone.

Of the meat part of the American dinner I have little to say; except that veal and pork seemed much commoner than beef and mutton, and that whatever was the meat, it was spoiled by being baked, or in some way or other robbed of its proper juices. I do not laugh at the American for liking molasses with his pork, or preserves with his turkey, because the American ridicules us Englishmen for eating "apple-sauce" with goose, and I have no particular answer to make to the attack. Neither do I personally like to heap my plate with five or six kinds of food at the same time, and then swallow the mountain as fast as if I was eating for a wager;—but, then, one only sees this at railway stations, and among rough sort of people; though undoubtedly the Americans generally do eat with rather a dyspeptic haste, and in very dismal silence.

The prairie-hen of the north-west prairies forms a memorable feature of Wisconsin dinners; for the bird (a sort of grouse) is plump and savoury, and has a most refined flavour, which is peculiarly its own. The frog, with its white flesh and soft bones, is as much eaten in America as in France. Its flesh is as savoury as that of a rabbit; but the sensation of eating a new kind of food disturbs one's enjoyment, and gives it rather the air of a crime. Bear-steaks form a common dish in Arkansas; and very wholesome and good-flavoured "Bar meat" is, with this special and recommendable property about it, that you can eat more of it than of any other meat, including even venison. It might, however, give a nervous man a qualm to think that the bear might only last week have "chawed" up half a backwoodsman. Alligator-steaks, not uncommon on the Mississippi, I have not tasted, but I am told that they are by no means despicable; but in Alabama I dined off 'possum, and very rich, red, and greasy the meat was, tasting much like that of a sucking-pig.

But I must hurry on to the pastry, the chief novelty in which is the universal national dish, "pumpkin pie," without which no American dinner can be perfect. In pies the Americans are certainly unrivalled, and of all their pies "pumpkin" is the best. It is as delicate as the finest custard, and has much the same flavour. I never grew tired of it; for it is exceedingly nutritious without being heavy, and is as good hot as cold. It is generally made in shallow plates, and is always for sale in long triangular slices at every railway-station refreshment-room. Of real English plum-pudding, alas, the American has lost all tradition, and what they call plum-pudding is a miserable fiction indeed; but then their apple-pudding is no bad substitute. Brandy peaches and stewed prunes deserve record as part of the more playful portion of the transatlantic dinner.

The dessert is always varied and good. In the North there are magnificent apples, larger and quicker-grown than ours, and of a beautiful flavour. The pears are equally meritorious. Then there are wealth of almonds, pecan-nuts, hickory-nuts, melons, &c. But the South has a far richer display for her tables. At the St. Charles's Hotel, New Orleans, you have mellow plantains, the long yellow skin of which you peel off in strips, and then partake of the soapy-acid flesh at your leisure. There are little green limes, too, to throw into your toddy, and oranges just picked from the tree, with a green and not a yellow skin. Then there is the great sour shaddock and the gigantic alligator (avocado) pear, the custardy rind of which is to be eaten with vinegar and pepper, and the stone of which is as large as a cricket-ball. This is the land, too, for green peppers to eat with your cold meat, and for raw and cooked tomatoes. To go back for a moment one stage earlier in the dinner, at all liberal hotels they give you plenty of ice both with your water and your wine. And here, too, a word about the wine. No wine is given you at an American hotel dinner; you have to buy it. The wines are as dear as in Europe, except some of the cheaper forms of claret, which are not unfitted for the heavy and burning climate. Port and sherry are hardly ever drunk, being too brandied and fiery for such an atmosphere as that of America. Champagne and the better clarets seem the favourite wines; nor are the Rhine wines entirely neglected. But they now grow round Cincinnati, on the earth-banks of the Ohio river, the admirable sparkling Catawba wine, which, with more care in the making, would soon rival champagne. The St. Louis wine, too, is much extolled.

The great want of America is a good healthy beverage, not sour, yet not too strong. A cheap wine in universal circulation would soon put an end to the perpetual practice of taking drams every hour or so. The Germans have, it is true, introduced every where their honest, fresh, creamy, lager beer; and very pleasant it is, were it not rather too heavy for digestion in such a climate. But the hotel-keepers are afraid of its superseding their drams; so that the result is, that it is very seldom sold at bar-rooms, and is never procurable at hotel-dinners. As for the English bottled ale and stout, it is generally bad, and supplied by some fourth-rate house, who ignore Bass, Allsopp, and Guinness. Coffee is generally served round on the conclusion of dinner. The American sips it up; then suddenly, whatever rank he may be, without saying a word to you, though he may have been engaged in the most hearty and interesting conversation three minutes before, he thrusts away his plate, draws his chair back, picks up his felt hat, and walks silently off. With all wish to be tolerant, I must say that I think this a very boorish habit. How much better the Frenchman's conventional bow, the Englishman's quiet "good by," or parting compliment and joke! Dinner may be one of man's vulgar animal necessities, but it is as well to render that unpleasant fact as little palpable as possible.

But before I follow my abrupt friend to the smoking-room or the reading-room, let me go back some hours, and sketch the American breakfast at seven, eight, or nine o'clock, a.m., for I have a sincere respect for this meal; it is the inauguration of the day, the foundation-stone of the twenty-four hours, a ceremony almost religious, a most becoming commencement to toil and labour.

"Why, Cuffy (the bill of fare is a foot long),—fish, roast, boiled, vegetables, fruit. Very well, then; bring me hominy, coffee, iced milk, white fish, eggs, a cutlet, prairie-hen, and some corn-bread."

"Any hot cakes, massa?"

"No, Cuffy; I never eat hot cakes; and mind, stale bread."

By and by I find myself surrounded by a perfect armada of little white dishes: here the cutlet, and its little dried pellets of fried potato; there the Alps of snowy beaded hominy; there my friend the white fish with lack-lustre eye. Now the Herculean labour commences,—the interesting experiment on the expansive nature of the human stomach. But first Cuffy, with an admiring look at my ambitious aims, brings me two large glass goblets: in one he places three glittering cubes of ice, and brims them over with the snowiest milk; in the other he empties the golden yolks of two eggs, after the custom of the country. Now I buckle myself to my task, yet still with one eye open to observe the diet and peculiarities of my neighbours. Lean and sallow creatures, —planters and judges, fragile beauties, and quakerly matrons,—what tremendous inroads they make on the spongy steaming bread and the hot muffin cakes! That masculine yet bony authoress from New England has actually built up a sort of monument to Mrs. Beecher Stowe of slap-jacks; now she butters each layer, then pours libations of molasses on the whole, and lo! in less than ten minutes the monument is no more, and the strong-minded woman herself has stalked down-stairs and gone shopping, in defiance of all dietetic laws, human and divine. Nor is that phlegmatic Judge Pyncheon, from Missouri yonder, killing himself less surely by rounds on rounds of (Indian) corn-bread, brown, heavy, and slabby. And now, having discussed breakfast, let me go down-stairs into the bar-room, where already some thirsty citizens are actually beginning to "liquor up."

I can hardly very well generalise the American bar-room, because it has different characteristics in the North and South; but I may call it a large hall, often capable of holding some two thousand persons, as at the St. Charles's Hotel, New Orleans, where it is used for slave auctions and for political meetings. The floor is generally marble, and so is the long handsome counter, on which often stand huge china bowls of Roman punch, and bottles of cognac and bitters. The bar-keeper is a well-dressed man, with an air of doing work that by no means lowers or disgraces him. In winter, he sits with his feet high up on his stove; in summer, he is in a nankeen coat or in his plain shirt-sleeves. Behind the counter there is always a huge block of ice, resting on saw-dust, and

with a hook run into it to move it about more readily. His spare moments are spent in talking to friends about the last "caucus" meeting, and in smashing up the ice into half-tumblersful. Now, unless you take lager beer, every thing you drink in America is iced; whether it is brandy-cocktail, gin-sling, corpse-reviver, stone-fence, eye-opener, New Jersey lightning, mint-julep, Japanese, or Catawba cobbler.

It would take years to learn how to make all these compounds; but they all seem to me to contain one ingredient, and that is *bitters*; the object is not so much to quench thirst as to give tone to the stomach, and to repair the deleterious effects of incessant tobacco-chewing. The quantity of spirit put into each tumbler cannot be more than a wine-glassful. No juggler could dribble in the spirit and bitters, next throw in the ice, then toss the whole into a tin cup, and pour and repour it into a glass quicker or more unerringly than an American bar-keeper. Of all I tasted, I thought the "Catawba cobbler" the most delicious, the "brandy-cocktail" the most wholesome, the "Japanese" the most dangerous, the "mint-julep" the most original,—the flavour in this is produced by bruising up with the ice the juicy tops of fresh-picked green mint,—the "eye-opener" is a mere medicine, the "gin-sling" is harmless, in moderation. Many of the barmen in New York are well-known characters, as celebrated as Blondin or Barnum, and might, for all I know, stand a chance of running for Congress. The most celebrated bar in New York is Domenico's, near the Exchange. Incredible sums pour over Domenico's marble counter every year.

Of the drawing-rooms at an American hotel I cannot relate much that would interest. The bullies, the rowdies, the loafer, the garrulous politician, shun them for the fuming smoking-room or the stimulating bar. The result is, that usual quiet, vapid, dead level of respectable dullness that characterises decent society all the world over; bland commonplace is the fashion; dogged holding to truth, stanch defence of principles dearest to the heart and inseparable from one as the heartstrings, is vulgar. The result is, bows, small-talk, tea, quadrilles, and as early a breaking-up as possible. The bad, it is true, is sifted away, but so is all that is honest, vigorous, characteristic, national, and original. Originality is the one thing second-class society dreads and hates. The hotel society is, however, quite free; any stranger who chooses to take the trouble to put on evening-dress can go and enter into conversation with whom he will. Family parties of course hold together, but it is easy to get admitted into the circle; and as American ladies are never shy, but very amiable and talkative, much pleasant conversation can be obtained if you avoid slavery and other dangerous subjects, and resist the foolish attempt, often made in extreme bad taste, to praise every thing American, which, indeed, I required no prompting to do.

In the reading-rooms, if it be winter, there are one or two large china stoves always kept hot, which keep the room very evenly warm, but with a dry heat which I cannot think wholesome, even when the ventilation is

good. There are seldom any books in an hotel, for the Americans are too restless and busy to read much; they are not a reflective people, and are utterly indifferent to any record of the past; but the great tables are piled up with a litter of provincial papers, each padlocked to its own mahogany file-staff. The smallest town has its daily paper. There is the *St. Louis Tobacco-Plant* and the *Syracuse Daily Avalanche*, the blood-thirsty *Olive Branch*, and the *Saturday Stinger*, a review. Here is the *Richmond Independent*, there the *New Orleans Herald*; here the *Arkansas Patriot*, there the *Tennessee Intelligencer*; of all these the best are the *New York Herald* and *Tribune*, and one or two of the Boston papers; the *Herald* is very powerful as a commercial, the *Tribune* as an abolitionist, organ. Some of the papers have *feuilletons*; they are all rather violent and personal, excessively editorial, and too fond of laborious fine writing, often wasted on small local events.

The Americans are most voracious and miscellaneous newspaper-readers. This kind of reading suits their quick and too generally, I fear, superficial minds. I have seen an American read for hours steadily at newspapers, without sleep or weariness apparently supervening; I have seen a Chicago "drummer," as they called a commercial traveller in America, plunge into the sea of papers and read, skimming through some thirty of them, devoting the whole evening to this ingenious pursuit of knowledge, and going to bed at last evidently "*lassatus nondum satiatus*."

There are, however, neatly-kept book-shops in the halls or entrance-passages of nearly all American hotels,—sometimes in the outer staircase, as at New Orleans; sometimes close to the office, as in some of the New York houses. At these stalls there is always a strange *mélange* of books—Reynolds's twopenny novels far preponderating, and next to them two-shilling volumes of such rubbish as *The Highwayman of the Black Valley*, or miserable bald jest-books of local manufacture. But there are also sure to be some volumes of our English best writers of fiction,—Dickens, Thackeray, Miss Brontë, Trollope, Lever, and others,—but they are sadly in the minority.

The stalls are generally presided over by smart neatly-dressed boys, who are excellent salesmen, and know well how to tempt you with the last literary sweetmeat. But, after all, what they sell most of are those damp piles of newly-printed newspapers, that, folded like napkins, contain the last rumour about the cotton-crop, or the latest intelligence from England.

The barber's shop is also an important feature of the American hotel. It has generally two doors, one opening into the street, the other into the hall of the hotel, so that the general public may also have access to its privileges. Look into it at any hour of the day, you will nearly always see some unfortunate creature, with fixed head and snowy chin, undergoing his daily torture. The American does not submit to the barber in the quiet attitude we assume, but throws his head back in an arm-chair

shaped for the purpose, and deposits his feet on a high stool, as high nearly as his head. The barbers are generally good-natured, talkative, deferential blacks.

The telegraph-office is also a useful institution of the American hotel, and is most convenient for planters who wish to send messages about prices to their overseers. When, however, it is actually in the reading-room, as in the chief hotel of Washington, the constant rat-tatting of the signal is unbearable.

In the Southern hotels the waiters are all Negro slaves, in the North they are generally black; the free Negro is far less civil and attentive than the slave. The chambermaids at all the hotels are Irish-women, who seem all to dress alike, and have the same type of features, and to be equally careless, inattentive, and impertinently and unnecessarily disagreeable in their assertions of independence. It would aggravate a saint to see these ugly, lazy women, in their crinolined Lowell gowns, flaunt about the passages with the airs of duchesses, whisking about their ridiculous feather-brushes, and doing no more real work than if they were the wives of the proprietor of the hotel. I never saw them do any honest scrubbing, or rough hard cleaning, but they jingle about keys, and lounge up and down stairs, and drawl in with the piece of soap and the jug of water in a mechanical indifferent way, that I think requires great practice to put up with silently. It was one of these abominable mock servants who told a friend of mine who was about to engage her as cook, that she should require a parlour to receive her friends in. Another of them had the impudence to put a pair of boots, that a friend of mine put out at the door at night to be cleaned, in the dusthole. Few "helps" ever think of cleaning boots, and think it tyrannical and insult even to ask them to do it.

It is not much use ringing the bedroom-bell in an American hotel. It is true that, after some time, some waiter may come, but ten to one if after all, when he goes down, he returns with what you want. You very likely will hear those accursed Irish chambermaids dawdling about with their keys, their affected voices, and Americanised brogue; but they are far too grand to answer bells, and you might die before they would come. The fact is, it is not the custom to ring for servants, unless in cases of necessity. Whatever you want you mention to the clerk in the office down-stairs, and he will see to it,—whether it is clothes you have for the wash, or a bath you require, whether a parcel is to be sent off, or a message is to be left for a friend,—whatever it is, the clerk is bound to see to it. It is he who has you called for any special morning-train; he makes out your bill, or orders your breakfast at a given hour, takes in your letters, or gives you information about trains and steamboats. These clerks are model men, and never seem wearied of answering your questions. The landlord you probably never see—he is a company, or he is a merchant. In fact, the hotel in America is a vast palatial barracks, where all individuality is

lost, yet where every one is free to do as he likes. For eight or ten shillings a day, and no extras of any kind, the simplest traveller may have his four meals *per diem*, and all the comforts of a prince's house—splendidly furnished drawing-rooms, good society, reading-rooms, and all the luxuries of a royal mansion. There is always a carriage, at a small fixed charge, to convey you at any hour to train or steamboat; and a quarter-dollar to the porter who carries in and out your luggage is all that is ever expected from you by the servants. If you choose to break the routine of the house and dine in private rooms, or at unseasonable hours, the extra charges are very heavy; in all other cases they are immutable.

In every respect but that of privacy, which no gregarious or social traveller should wish for, American hotels seem to me at least a century in advance of those in England. Here, from the moment a traveller sets his foot within the door, the sole object of every one in the house seems to be to extort from him every farthing that the greediest exactions can wring from his purse. The American system, on the other hand, moves on fixed mechanical laws, and never stops to think of the single guest. It is true the American does not even dream of what we unsocially call cosiness. High walls to gardens, high walls to pews, high walls at eating-houses, private rooms at inns, high fences to estates, are all unknown in America, where the tastes are more Continental, and the life is necessarily more in the open air. The American likes the free suite of rooms, open to all—the republican *table-d'hôte*—the long open railway carriage. There every thing is for the many, and not for the few: the many make the laws for the good of the many; the streets are made splendid for the pleasure of the many; the city parks are for the many. America is the poor man's Paradise, England the rich man's Eden. The American system of hotels encourages travelling, and it pays because travellers are so numerous, owing to this encouragement. Commercially, they answer admirably. It is time, then, that our own abominable high-charging system should be abolished; for it prohibits travelling, and renders the home circuit of tourists the dearest, the dimmest, and most wrangling and uncomfortable possible.

Ancient Classical Novelists.

PART III.

IAMBlichus, AND XENOPHON THE EPHESIAN.

OUR view of the regular order in which fiction developed itself has been somewhat interrupted by the introduction of Lucian into the series, who no doubt deserves recognition more as a generally amusing writer than purely as a novelist. We trust, however, that the specimens we have given of his wit, humour, and power of narrative have justified this deviation from the strict path of literary genealogy. All the writers who remain to be discussed are the lineal successors of the Antonius Diogenes already mentioned; and the first of the two authors whose names head this Paper may even be considered a novelist in the usual modern sense,—since he uses as the chief basis of interest the difficulties which retard the fortunate completion of a love-affair.

IAMBlichus—whose work is entitled *Babylonica*—is not to be confounded with the author of the *Life of Pythagoras*, who lived in the time of Julian. Our Iamblichus* was a Syrian, and flourished under the Emperor Trajan. He was educated at Babylon, and only learnt Greek late in life, but is said to have acquired it perfectly enough to become a rhetorician himself. What sort of Greek he wrote, however, we cannot say, for though we are going to give an account of his book, we have nothing but the Epitome of Photius to draw upon, the original having entirely perished. There is a story that the work existed in Ms. down to the year 1671, and was then destroyed by fire; but this does not seem to be supported by trustworthy evidence, nor is it certain that the supposed fragments really belonged to it at all.† The plot of the story, however, is clearly enough told by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and is as follows.

Sinonis, an Assyrian lady of great beauty, was engaged to be married to Rhodanes, a lover in every way worthy of her. Garmus, the king of Babylonia, proposed to deprive Rhodanes of his betrothed; and on her refusal to accede to this arrangement, took both into custody, ordered Rhodanes to be crucified, and confined Sinonis with a golden chain. By coaxing her jailors, Sacas and Damas, she escaped; and Rhodanes got

* The penultimate syllable of his name is long, being derived from Iamlék, a name which occurs in 1 Chron. iv. 34, among the posterity of Simeon.

† We have not seen the "new one of some length" which the writer of the article "Iamblichus" in Dr. Smith's Dictionary states to have been discovered by Mai. Our opinion is based on the researches and reasonings of Chardon de la Rochette, who appears to have examined the question with much care. The fragment he gives is descriptive of a royal procession at Babylon, and contains nothing to connect it with any part of the story which Photius epitomises.

away also. When this fact came to the king's ears, he cut off those of the two officers, and having also deprived them of their noses, sent them in quest of the fugitives. The latter took refuge in the cottage of an old woman, who showed them a cave with its mouth concealed by brushwood, and extending for three miles (thirty stadia). The pursuers, though they had surrounded the spot, were at fault; but a shield happening to fall through the opening betrayed the hiding-place. Damas and his followers dug a trench of circumvallation round it; but made so much noise in giving his orders, that the lovers had timely warning, and got away to the further opening. The digging of the trench disturbed a nest of wild bees, which had fed on poisonous flowers; they stung most of Damas's soldiers, who either died or became very ill; and Rhodanes and Sinonis, having eaten some of the honey, were overcome by its narcotic effects, and falling by the wayside were left for dead by their pursuers, who charitably covered them up, and left some food as offerings to their *manes*. In time they were awoke by finding the crows fighting for the honour of devouring their bodies; and meeting with two asses, took possession of them to continue their journey. They next fell into the hands of a robber, who was also a cannibal, but were saved from appearing at his table by the wretch himself being caught by Damas, who, not knowing of their proximity, set the premises on fire, from which they only escaped by killing their animals and walking out over their carcases. Captured by the soldiers, they pretended to be ghosts of some of the people whom the robber had murdered, and next took possession of an empty tomb, which had just been vacated, owing to the intended occupier's having come to life in the middle of his funeral ceremonies. Here they feasted so luxuriously on the food and wine they found, that on being traced by their pursuers they were again taken for dead. On resuming their journey, Sinonis attempted to sell some of the clothes taken from the tomb, but was taken up for sacrilege, and brought before a magistrate named Soroeshus, who thought her pretty enough to be an acceptable offering to the king. Rather than come before Garmus again, Rhodanes and the lady prepared to take poison; but Soroeshus, having discovered their design, abstracted it, and substituted a soporific drug, during the operation of which he attempted to convey them to the king; but on their waking and trying a more effectual means of suicide, and relating their misfortunes, he let them go, pointing out the temple of Venus on an island in the river, where the wound of Sinonis might be cured. The priestess of this temple had two sons, named Tigris and Euphrates, exactly alike, and a daughter called Mesopotamia. Tigris had died some time before, owing to his having swallowed a beetle in a rose he was eating; but his mother believed that he was turned into a demi-god. As soon as Rhodanes approached, she discovered so remarkable a likeness to her son that she fancied he had come back from the shades, with Proserpine (in the shape of Sinonis) to conduct him. Rhodanes availed himself of the hint, and "assumed the god," as the readiest means of baffling his pursuers.

In the mean time, however, the medical man who had been called in by Sorcechus to cure Sinonis's wound had violated professional confidence, and delated the affair to Damas, who immediately sent Sorcechus under a guard before the king, and despatched the informer to the temple with a letter ordering the extradition of the fugitives. He had to cross the river on a camel, and hung the letter, in the usual way, on the animal's right ear; but happening somehow or other to get drowned when half-way across, the camel finished the passage, and Rhodanes, taking the letter from its ear, understood the fate in store for him. He instantly set off with Sinonis, and happening to meet with Sorcechus on his way to Garmus, killed the guards and set him free, as a return for his former kindness. The priest was arrested by Damas, and condemned to change his profession for that of an executioner; his son Euphrates, whom from his likeness he had addressed as Rhodanes, shared his fate. Sacas,—who it will be remembered was the fellow-officer of Damas,—supposing Euphrates to be Rhodanes, and Mesopotamia to be the missing Sinonis, sent word to Garmus that the birds were caught.

The real Rhodanes and Sinonis had taken refuge in the cottage of a rustic, whose daughter was in mourning for her husband, and had cut off her hair. Sinonis had been provident enough to preserve the gold chain with which she had been at first fastened up, and now sent the daughter out to sell it. The latter happened to go to the very goldsmith who had made it, who, suspecting her to be the lady who was "wanted," sent a message to Damas, and put his customer under surveillance. She observed herself followed, and, being too clever to go home, attempted to lead them off the scent by going to another house, which she supposed to be deserted, but which was, in fact, occupied by a slave who had just murdered a young woman there, and was hiding till the affair should blow over. On her arrival,—thinking, probably, that he was discovered,—he killed himself. A quantity of his blood got sprinkled over the girl's person; and her appearance was so shocking, that, as she came back towards her home, she frightened the detectives entirely away. The gold chain had been in the mean time sent to Garmus; but his informants were not positive enough about the person to induce him to inquire further.

Rhodanes and Sinonis, finding themselves harassed as usual, prepared to leave the rustic, and Rhodanes, without thinking any harm, gave the pretty widow a kiss in return for her trouble. Sinonis found him out, of course; the girl had apparently forgotten to wash her face, and some of the blood had become transferred—like the wine-stain in Goethe's ballad*—to the

* *Wirkung in die Ferne* (influence at a distance). At a court banquet, a girl happens to throw some wine over her dress, and runs off to change it. At the same time the queen sends her page (who happens to be the maiden's lover) for her purse. The pair meet in one of the passages, and exchange a kiss, which leaves a ruddy mark on the youth's countenance. The queen draws attention to the remarkable fact, that a cup of wine spilt in the banquet-hall should have had power to stain something at the other end of the palace.

cheeks of Rhodanes. Sinonis, being a violent young person, seized a sword, and rushed off to kill her supposed rival, but was diverted from her purpose by Soroechus, with whom she put up at the house of a rich fellow named Setapus. Setapus attempted to exact the ransom which some people expect from ladies whom they assist on their travels; but Sinonis, who had no idea of carrying her weapon about for nothing, pretended to submit to the conditions of her host, and then played the part of Judith or Jael; after which feat, feeling herself in the humour for more work, quitted the house without telling Soroechus what she had done, and went to the cottage with a view of exacting vengeance on the widow for the kiss, which still rankled in her mind. Soroechus, finding her gone, took some of the servants and a carriage, and brought her back in time to prevent further mischief; but the attendants of the late Setapus, finding their master killed, arrested the fair homicide, and took her off, not as a fugitive, but as a criminal.

Soroechus put dust on his head, cut his clothes, and went, like a refractory pauper, to tell Rhodanes, who did not see his way out of the affair except by going through the operation of "happy despatch." However, his friend suggesting that while there was life there was hope, with other equally original topics of consolation, turned him from his fell purpose. Garmus, having had letters from Sacas about a lady who had tried to dispose of a gold chain, took it for granted that the prey was captured at last, settled to marry Sinonis as soon as she should arrive, sacrificed to the gods, rejoiced abundantly, and—out of the gladness of his heart—commanded a general gaol-delivery throughout all the kingdom. The real Sinonis of course got the benefit of this act, and was at large again almost as soon as arrested. As for Damas, Garmus ordered him to be put to death; and, hearing from the goldsmith that Sinonis (as he supposed her to be—but really the cottager's daughter) had made her escape, he issued a warrant for the execution of that unfortunate tradesman, and ordered all the messengers that had been sent after her, together with their wives and children, to be buried alive.

At this point we learn that Rhodanes had a dog, and Sinonis a father, neither of which appendages have been previously mentioned. The former animal appears to have followed the widow—that is, the cottager's daughter (why didn't Mr. Iamblichus give her a name?)—when she went to the deserted house where the slave killed himself, and staying behind ate the whole of the slave's body, as well as a good deal of that of the girl he had murdered. The father of Sinonis happened to enter this house, and recognised the dog, though after having had two corpses to himself for about ten days he must have grown out of all knowledge. Without ever asking him to bark and explain himself, which Anubis would surely have enabled him to do if time had been given, the irate parent exclaimed, like Llewellyn in the ballad of "Beth Gelert,"

"Hell-hound, by thee my child's devour'd!"

and incontinently slew the creature. He then partially interred the bodies, and having written on the wall with the dog's blood an inscription, "Here lies the fair Sinonias," hanged himself then and there. Soroechus and Rhodanes soon arrived, by some extraordinary chance, at this fatal domicile; and the latter, seeing his intended father-in-law *sus. per coll.*, prepared to follow the suicidal example; having also written, "And the fair Rhodanes," as his own modest epitaph. Soroechus thought they might as well all go together, so he, too, put his head into the noose. Just as both were on the brink of Elysium, and Rhodanes had gone so far as to inflict a slight wound, the widow rushed in, and seeing the situation with surprising quickness, cried out, "It is not Sinonias who lies here," cut down Soroechus, snatched the sword from Rhodanes, told them the whole history of the dead slave, explaining that she came to possess herself of some money which he was supposed to have buried in the place. Soroechus went for a doctor, while she stayed to dress the wound of Rhodanes; and while thus engaged, who should make her appearance but Sinonias. She had not in the least forgotten her jealousy—had gone to the girl's father with a drawn sword in her hand; and that extraordinary rustic, who seems to have had the queerest notions of parental duty that Babylonian was ever blessed with, actually told her where his daughter was to be found. The situation was awkward; Sinonias did not in the least believe in Sisters of Charity; and here was her lover tended by a handsome widow, whom he was proved to have surreptitiously kissed once before. She made a furious rush at the object of her enmity, but Rhodanes could not as a gentleman suffer his nurse to be turned into a patient, so he restrained Sinonias, and after a struggle took away her sword. This, as might be expected, did not mitigate her rage; she flew out of the house, exclaiming, "I invite you to Garmus's wedding," and did not return.

The son and daughter of the priestess, Euphrates and Mesopotamia, were in the mean time brought before Garmus, who, finding that the latter was not Sinonias, gave her over to an officer named Zobaras to be beheaded; to deter, as he said, any one from assuming her name a second time. Zobaras, of course, fell in love with his charge, and instead of beheading her took her to the court of Berenice, who had just succeeded to the throne of Egypt by the death of her father. Berenice protected the lovers, and was in consequence immediately involved in a war with King Garmus. The latter gave Euphrates over to the executioner; but the unlucky monarch was fated to disappointment in all his cherished projects; for the fact is, though we cannot expect the reader to remember it, that, as a punishment for harbouring Sinonias, the priest of Venus had been compelled to undertake the unpleasant office; and Euphrates therefore found himself in no worse hands than those of his own father. The latter as yet had had no work, and as it was important that the priest should not stain his hands with human blood, his son performed his duty for him, and soon had the opportunity of saving a life, as his

own had been saved. Sinonis* does not appear to have carried out her threat of marrying Garmus; but she somehow or other became the wife of a king of Syria, of whom we had not previously heard. The first use she made of her power was to wreak her vengeance on the cottager's daughter; but the latter found favour in the eyes of Euphrates, and evaded discovery by wielding in an official capacity—and we conclude in male attire—the axe which had been destined for her own throat. This arrangement gave Euphrates an opportunity of escaping in the disguise of the jailor's daughter.

Soroechus was ordered by Garmus to be crucified; and his cross was set up in the very spot where Rhodanes and Sinonis had made their first halt, and where they had discovered a mysterious treasure, which they had no time to carry away. Just in time he was taken down by a body of soldiers of the Alani, whose pay was in arrear, and whom he persuaded to acknowledge him as king and levy war against Garmus. In the mean time Garmus had crucified Rhodanes also, had got drunk, and was dancing round him with intense delight, enjoying his agonies, when news came of the marriage of Sinonis to the King of Syria. Garmus at once took down his victim, made him a general officer, and put him in command of an expedition against the Syrian prince; but secretly gave orders to his private emissaries, that as soon as Rhodanes had conquered his adversary and recovered the lady, he was to be assassinated. Rhodanes obtained a victory and possession of Sinonis; but the plot against him failed, and he turned his forces against Garmus, whom he overthrew and deprived of his kingdom.—

Iamblichus did not describe Rhodanes married, or the Patriarch of Constantinople has not thought it necessary to continue his abridgment beyond this point; but we have an idea that Sinonis was a vixen, and that Rhodanes did not find her worth all the coil that had been made about her. It is evident that she never forgave her lover for taking the widow's part, which is an unamiable trait in her character; and it destroys our interest in her to find that she married some one else instead of waiting for Rhodanes to the end of the seventeenth book.† Possibly it was the fashion for novelists to be realistic in the days of Iamblichus; and the poetic justice, which has since been so useful to writers and agreeable to readers, was not then considered as a matter of course. The Oriental education of our author might also lead him to look upon such matters in a light different from that in which they appear to us.

On the ground of representation of manners, character, or style, it is of course impossible now to form any judgment of this novel; but in respect of its narrative, it may be allowed to possess some ingenuity. Let it be remembered that it was probably the first of its kind; that is, the first having any pretension to a plot in which one part bears upon

* This part of the story is rather obscurely told by Photius.

† Or thirty-ninth, according to some authorities.

another, as distinguished from a succession of adventures which may be cut short at any moment. At the same time, it cannot be said that the invention of the author is very brilliant; many of the incidents are too much alike, and that of the likeness between Rhodanes and the sons of the priest, on which so much is made to turn, is excessively forced. The best incident in the story appears to be the release of the real Sinon, in consequence of the king's intended marriage to the supposed Sinon,—certainly a most unexpected turn of fortune, and one which has a good deal of comic force about it. The circumstances in general are perhaps sufficiently probable for a pantomime; for the libretto of an opera they would be scarcely good enough, though the trials of the lovers in the *Zauberflöte* have a certain degree of resemblance to those which we have just related.

We cannot detain the reader with any thing even distantly approaching to a biographical account of the next novelist; for there is absolutely no mention of him in any ancient writer except Suidas, and scholars have always wondered why Photius did not epitomize him. It is not even certain that XENOPHON was his real name, or that he lived at Ephesus; for the rhetoricians sometimes concealed themselves under pseudonyms, just as prizefighters call themselves Wednesday Wallopers or Birmingham Pets. There is only one Ms. of his work, which is preserved in the Monastery of the Monte Cassino, near Florence, written in extremely tiny characters, and supposed to belong to the eleventh century. From certain internal evidence, it seems pretty clear that the writer, whoever he was, lived in the age of the Antonines; and we are the less inclined to believe that he belonged to a later period, because his Greek is remarkably good, his style singularly clear, and almost, though not quite, free from conceits or rhetorical turns of thought. An easier or more perspicuous style it would be difficult to find any where, except perhaps in the works of his Athenian namesake. The story is a better one than that of Iamblichus, and a reader may really find himself interested in parts of the original; though we cannot flatter ourselves that this quality will be preserved in our account of it. However, here it is. It is called *Ephesiaca*; or, *the Adventures of Habrocomas and Anthia*.

Habrocomas was an Ephesian youth, of such surpassing beauty that his fellow-citizens almost adored him as a god. He was accomplished in music and literature, and skilled in all manly exercises,—a complete Admirable Crichton of his time. But he was as vain as he was clever and handsome, and was particularly scornful on the subject of love, whose statues he thought quite below comparison with his own person. Certainly they were, but it was not good manners to say so; and the God of Love resented the insult, and prepared a dire revenge on this upstart rival. He found his opportunity at a festival of Diana, to whose temple, a short distance from the city, it was the custom for the youths and maidens of Ephesus to walk in procession, bearing the insignia of the goddess,—torches, bows, arrows, baskets,—and followed by horses and dogs. This time it was Habrocomas who headed the youths; while the leader

of the girls, and the fairest of the whole troop, was a certain maiden named Anthia, whose beauty was enhanced by the richness and elegance of her attire. Her hair was auburn; part of it was plaited round her head, but the greater quantity was left to the wind to play with as it pleased. Her eyes were spirited,* but with the gaiety of girlhood they combined the severer expression of a modest maiden. Her dress was a purple tunic, fastened at the shoulders and gathered up just above the knee; over it was thrown a fawn-skin, and her bow and arrows hung behind. In her hands she held a couple of spears, and was followed by her hounds.† It was not wonderful that the Ephesians, who, when they had met her walking about in her every-day costume, had adored her as much as Diana, should now take her for the goddess herself. Nothing else was talked about while she was passing but the beautiful Anthia; but when Habrocomas came in sight, most of the crowd forgot the previous object of their admiration, and concentrated their gaze upon him,—only a few observed, what a handsome couple the two would make. The consequence, however, was that each of the two admired people wished to see the other, and the amorous deity might be said to have drawn his first parallel.

As soon as they entered the temple, both processions broke up and mingled together. Habrocomas and Anthia saw each other, and instantly fell head over ears in love. Habrocomas, who was not used to admiring any one but himself, resisted the pleasing enchantment as much as he could, but was obliged to give in at last, and could not keep his eyes off the young lady. As for Anthia, she surrendered her heart at once, and, though it is shocking to relate of one whose looks have just been described as severely modest, we fear there is no doubt that she did her best to attract the object of her admiration, by talking on purpose for him to hear her charming voice, and even allowing him to see the elegance of her figure.‡ Xenophon does not say whether his hero and heroine enjoyed the delight of each other's conversation, though it would have been amusing to know what was the usual way, in his time, of beginning a flirtation with a young person to whom one has not been introduced. Did Habrocomas suggest that Anthia might see the ceremony better if she stood a little on this side? did he tread on the sandals of some stout Ephesian common-councillor, to make him move out of the way, or remove his stool—"for a lady, sir"—just as he was going to sit

* *Γοργύς* is the Greek word. It generally means "fierce," but seems to be used here in the sense in which Xenophon the historian (whose style this one is said to have imitated) applies it to horses.

† Those who have been fortunate enough to see Miss Herbert in the burlesque of *Endymion* will be able to realise this picture.

‡ Mr. Hirschig, whose Latin translation is not of the most polished, has translated the words *ἐν γυμνασίου ἄν τὰ θυγάτηρ* by "*corporis partes inspiciendas nudavit*," a bit of coarseness we do not find in the two former and better editors, Locella and Peirlkamp. They add, "*quas honeste potuit*," or some similar phrase, which makes all the difference.

down? or did he venture to remark that it was very warm in such a crowd? or did he ask Anthia where she bought her fawn-skin? or did he quiz the other girls? or was he bashful,—which Mrs. Ellis says is always the way at first with genuine attachments,—and did he in that case confine himself to making friends with the dogs, which, indeed, would be a prudent thing to do in any case, seeing that people then wore no trousers, and presented, in respect of their calves, a terrible easy prey? On these points we have no information; but from the perturbed state in which both parties passed the night, it is to be inferred that neither had had the courage to say any thing. Habrocomas, who had now no further thought of resistance to the God of Love, did not see his way to making acquaintance; and Anthia was miserable, because, though *dreadfully* handsome, he seemed so proud. They both went to the temple the next day, when Habrocomas poured out his soul in loud and lamentable prayers, which set Anthia's mind at rest about his feelings; but she immediately discovered a fresh source of torment in the way the other women looked at him, fancying, of course, that he could not help being attracted by some of them. Both the lovers soon carried their passion to such a pitch that they became quite ill, and their respective parents could not think (they never can) what was the matter. Anthia's papa and mamma sent for several priests; but as it never occurred to her to tell these reverend persons that she was merely dying for a handsome young man, of course they went away as wise as they came. A somewhat similar process having been tried in the case of Habrocomas with a similar result, both families sent to consult the Oracle of Apollo at Colophon, requesting particularly that the god would give them "a true answer," which, we should say, conveyed a shocking insult, as implying that he sometimes told fibs,—but then the ancients were not so nice as we are about these imputations. He returned nine indifferent Greek verses, to the effect that the remedy was to be sought in the same quarter as the disease; that both parties had a good deal of trouble before them; that their "destiny"—like that of a more recently celebrated pair of lovers—would in great measure "hang by boats;" that a tomb and a fire would be their nuptial couch; and that all would come right at the Temple of Isis in Egypt. The anxious parents then understood the state of affairs, and married the couple out of hand. The wedding was splendid, and the nuptial chamber was ornamented with beautiful paintings,—Venus sat attended by Cupids, who rode on the backs of sparrows, while before Mars, crowned with the garland of peace, Love himself walked, with a lamp in his hand, to guide his footsteps* to the chamber of his mistress.

* This passage may possibly have suggested the pretty lines which Jortin, or some other modern scholar, passed off as part of an ancient inscription:

"Te sequar obscurum per iter: dux ibit eunti
Fidus amor, tenebras lampade discutiens."

And the latter may be the original of a striking couplet of Heber's, in one of his sacred poems.

It was not till the doors were shut, and the hymeneal song died away as the chorus receded through the house, that the bride and bridegroom regained their faculty of speech. Habrocomas said nothing worth recording, except that he congratulated Anthia on being "properly married" to the man she happened to be in love with, which shows that the idea expressed in the well-known lines of Shakespeare was then a recognised truth. Anthia gently reproached him for having been so long falling in love. She knew how unhappy he must have been when he had done so, from what she had suffered herself. She kissed his eyes, which had first wounded her by their brightness, and then thanked them for having conveyed her image to the soul of her lover, and told them she hoped they would never show her husband any woman whom he could think more beautiful than herself. Nothing could be more happy than the lovers, both then and for some time afterwards: they were so absorbed in each other, that they forgot all about the Oracle; but their parents, who seem to have thought that Fate might be propitiated by meeting it half-way, determined to send them to travel in Egypt under the care of a tutor (!), and attended by a valet and a maid, called Leucon and Rhoda. Habrocomas and his young wife were very miserable at leaving home, and did nothing for the first day or two but kiss each other, and swear eternal fidelity in case of separation. After a short voyage they touched at the island of Rhodes, where they offered, in the Temple of the Sun, a golden suit of armour, with an inscription stating the names and country of the donors. Their misfortunes now began. Soon after setting sail again they were calmed, and the sailors, having nothing to do, took to drinking, and left the vessel unguarded. Habrocomas dreamt that the ship was burnt, and that he and Anthia swam away from it; and the dream was not long coming true, for the next day some pirates took advantage of the calm to creep up to the ship and board her. Nobody thought of making any resistance, and Habrocomas and Anthia fell at their feet, imploring them to take their money and spare their life,* sell them for slaves, any thing, provided they sold them both to the same master. The scene was horrible and heartrending; part of the sailors were left behind in the burning ship, while those who were carried away congratulated them on dying before becoming slaves.† The unfortunate tutor threw himself into the

* τὰ μὲν χρήματα ἔχε, φείσται δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς. Vacation tourists, who explore the classic sites of Acarnania, may find the formula useful. The modern Greek mode of deprecation is probably to be had at the office of our contemporary the *Επεταυρὺς Ἀσπίς*.

† Xenophon here imitates a passage of Virgil, *Æn.* iii. 321, where Andromache, when Æneas finds her living with Pyrrhus at Buthrotum, avoids a direct answer to his questions by exclaiming how much Polyxena was to be envied, who died at Troy, and never passed into the hands of a master. It was all very well for Andromache to say this to Æneas years afterwards; but Virgil would scarcely have represented her as making such a speech at the actual moment of the sacrifice. Nothing, therefore, can be more tasteless than Xenophon's adoption of the idea under the existing circumstances. He is not, however, generally chargeable with similar want of judgment.

sea, and his pupil tried to induce the pirates to stop and take him in; but they paid no attention to either, and the tutor was consequently drowned. The pirates sailed away with Habrocomas and his wife to Tyre, where the latter, as was to be expected, excited the cupidity of the pirate-captain, who, finding that his own suit made little progress, sent a friend to Habrocomas to point out to him that he had better, under the circumstances, make up his mind to part with her. What did such a very young man want with a lady at all? Certainly, when a married gentleman is found travelling in *statu pupillari*, pirates, whose perceptions are coarse, may be excused for thinking that he is scarcely old enough to be trusted with either wife or property. The negotiation, however, was cut short by the arrival of the pirate's employer, Absyrtus, who took a purely commercial view of the two well-looking captives, and sent them and their attendants to his house, to be kept there till he could find good purchasers. But Absyrtus had a daughter named Manto, who immediately fell in love with Habrocomas, and told Rhoda to make the requisite proposals. Rhoda consulted her fellow-servant (and lover), Leucon, who took the message, and advised compliance; and Anthia gave the same-counsel, because she thought it would save the life of her husband. "I will go away somewhere," she said, "and kill myself; all I ask is, that you will kiss me when I am dead, bury me, and never forget Anthia." Manto, impatient of delay, sent a letter signed with her name to Habrocomas, to the same effect as her message, which he answered with as much indignation as Don Juan showed in his interview with Gulleyaz:

"Love is for the free.

I am not dazzled by this splendid roof:

Whate'er thy power, and great it seems to be,
Heads bow, knees bend, eyes watch around a throne,
And hands obey,—our hearts are still our own."

Manto was as much annoyed as Gulleyaz; but she did not show so much knowledge of human nature. Perhaps, if she had sent for Habrocomas and burst into tears, Anthia might have acquired cause for jealousy; but she only got in a rage, and complained to her father in the manner in which the spouse of Potiphar complained of Joseph. He believed her; flogged the presumptuous youth, and put him in prison, where Anthia sometimes managed to pay him a visit and keep up his spirits. Absyrtus had brought home a husband for his daughter, and on her marriage and departure for Syria he made her a present of Anthia, Leucon, and Rhoda as slaves. Manto's first act on reaching her new abode was to sell Leucon and Rhoda to a man who lived at Xanthus, and to marry Anthia to a goatherd, named Moeris, out of revenge; but Anthia, by telling him her sad story, persuaded him to remain only a husband in name. In the mean time Absyrtus happened to find the letter which Manto had sent to Habrocomas, and at once atoned for his injustice by giving him a high post in his household. Manto's troubles were not over; for her husband happened to observe the goatherd's supposed wife, and became enamoured

of her. Moeris told Manto of this, who ordered him to kill Anthia, which she thought he did; but he only sold her to some merchants, who, sailing away with her, were the same night wrecked on an unknown coast, and fell into the hands of robbers, commanded by a captain named Hippothous. In the mean time Manto wrote to her father to complain of her husband's conduct, and stated that she had sold the cause of it to some people trading to Syria; news which, coming to the ears of Habrocomas, caused him to throw up his appointment, and set off in quest of his wife. She was just then about to be sacrificed by her captors, by being bound to a tree, and having spears thrown at her; but just as this amusement was commencing, Perilaus, a magistrate of Tarsus, made a descent upon the band, and destroyed all of them except Hippothous. Perilaus, like every one else, fell in love with Anthia, and wished to marry her. She did not disclose her history; but in the hope, we suppose, that "something might turn up," asked and obtained a month's grace before being led to the altar. The escaped Hippothous went into Cilicia, where he met and "fraternized" with Habrocomas, and a comparison of notes having shown that Anthia was the person he had nearly slaughtered, they both determined to go afresh in search of her. She, in the mean time, was approaching the day fixed for her marriage with Perilaus, but resolved to die rather than suffer it to take place. At this juncture, an Ephesian physician came, in the course of his travels, to Tarsus, and was introduced to her. Being, like Juliet's apothecary, in a needy condition, he took a heavy bribe to supply her with poison. The wedding was performed; but the moment the bride retired to her chamber, she sent for a glass of water, and swallowed the draught. Perilaus entered to find her lifeless, gave her a magnificent funeral, and placed the body in a large tomb outside the city. What the physician had given her turned out to be only a sleeping potion. She woke in the tomb; but had scarcely regained her senses, before she fell into the hands of a band of robbers, who had come to plunder the offerings. Willing enough to die, she was forced to live, and was carried off to Alexandria, and sold to a rich Indian traveller named Psammiss, from whose violence she saved herself by pretending to be sacred to Isis, but was nevertheless kept in custody by him. Habrocomas heard the story of the marriage and the death, and followed the track to Egypt. There he was taken captive, and bought by a man named Araxus, whose wife immediately conceived a criminal passion for him, and proposed to kill her husband in order to marry him. Habrocomas, whose morality seems to have been confined to the sole virtue of conjugal fidelity, made no opposition to the first part of the scheme; but as soon as it was completed left the house in disgust, upon which the widow naturally denounced him as the murderer, and got him placed in prison.

Hippothous now thought of resuming his old trade, and with this view betook himself to Æthiopia, where he established himself with some followers in a range of hills convenient to a frequented caravan-track. About the same time Habrocomas suffered the extreme penalty of the law

for the murder of Araxus, by being crucified on the bank of the Nile. The cross, however, was blown down into the stream, and floated with its burden to the mouth, where the unfortunate man was caught again, and brought before the Viceroy of Egypt, who ordered him to be burnt. He ascended the pile, which was lighted, and began to blaze, when a sudden rising of the Nile extinguished it. The viceroy was so much struck by this prodigy that he remanded Habrocomas to prison, pending further inquiries as to who he was, and why he should be the object of such care on the part of the gods. In the mean time Psammis, accompanied by Anthia, travelled to Æthiopia, where he was attacked and killed by the followers of Hippothous, who took possession of his whole train and baggage; but neither Anthia nor the bandit recognised each other, and she pretended to be an Egyptian named Memphitis. Habrocomas was soon afterwards released, the truth about the murder of Araxus being discovered, and set off again upon his search. He of course took the wrong direction, and stayed a long time at Syracuse with an old fisherman named Aegialeus, whose peculiar taste was to keep his wife, long since dead, in an embalmed state in his chamber, where he said he found the contemplation of her wonderfully refreshing after a hard day's work in his boat.

Returning to the fortunes of Anthia, we hear that she had her usual ill-luck in attracting the attentions of one of Hippothous's followers, which, during the absence of the rest, one day assumed so marked a character, that she found herself obliged to put an end to him. Hippothous was very angry when he returned, and punished Anthia by burying her alive in a pit with two fierce dogs, and placing Amphinomus, one of his men, as a guard. Amphinomus, however, took pity on her, and put down through a hole bread enough to feed her and the dogs as well, so that it did not occur to them to eat their companion; and on Hippothous preparing to quit Æthiopia, which had grown too narrow a field for his predatory ambition, he took her out altogether, and carried her to Cop-tus. But the authorities were determined to root out Hippothous and his bandits before they did further mischief, and Polyidus, an active magistrate, headed a successful descent upon them. Some of the prisoners happened to see Amphinomus in a village they were passing, and pointed him out as having been one of their number: both he and Anthia were seized, and Polyidus, though a married man, made the proposals to which she, by this time, must have been tolerably well accustomed. At Memphis she found herself in considerable peril, and took refuge in the Temple of Isis. Polyidus, then for the first time hearing her story, compassionated her, and promised to offer her no further molestation; and she was still more comforted by a response from the Oracle that she should soon see her husband again. She had not counted on female jealousy; for the wife of Polyidus, hearing of his apparent intimacy with his fair captive, had her cruelly beaten, and then sent her to Tarentum, to be sold to a pandar. She ran great risk again on this occasion; but pretending to

have fits, was put up to sale, and eventually purchased by Hippothous, who had in the interim married and buried an heiress, and was now spending his fortune in buying any pretty thing that took his fancy. He had recognised her, and, on becoming her owner, acted like most of the other men she had met with. On hearing her story, however, and finding her to be the wife of his dearest friend, he treated her thenceforth with the greatest respect.

Habrocomas, who had left the Syracusan fisherman, and had been wandering about Italy, now turned his course homewards, and in his progress reached Rhodes. Alone, miserable, and in want of the necessities of life, he could not help contrasting his present condition with that which he enjoyed on his former visit to the island. He walked into the Temple of the Sun, where his own offering still remained; but near it was a gift from Leucon and Rhoda, who had settled in the place long before, and had become their master's heirs, with an inscription relating to the lost Anthia and Habrocomas. While he was looking at it, Leucon and Rhoda themselves came in, and observed with surprise a stranger gazing intently on the two offerings. Their question produced recognition and disclosure of his name, and they received their former master hospitably, intending to do all they could to further his views.

Hippothous, in the mean time, thought the best thing he could do was to take Anthia home. But on his way he also touched at Rhodes. Anthia, struck by the contrast of present grief and former joy, cut off a lock of her hair, and left it as an offering to the Sun, with an inscription mentioning, as was usual, the donor's name. It would have been too perverse a trick for Fortune to separate the two again, now that the "magic music" of circumstances was playing so very rapidly. Anthia, who had meant to leave the next day, was detained by a storm, and was found by Leucon and Rhoda in the temple, who soon brought Habrocomas to her. The news spread, and the Rhodians, who had a lively recollection of their previous visit, crowded to see the meeting. When it was over, the whole party, including Hippothous, set sail for Ephesus. Every body's parents were dead, and Habrocomas and Anthia found a handsome fortune waiting for them, which they shared with their three companions; and all lived together in great comfort and harmony for the rest of their lives.

This story is less known than some of which we shall give an account in a future Paper; but it has been generally admired by those who have read it. Some passages will be allowed to be pretty, and the description of the visit of Habrocomas to Rhodes on the second occasion is conceived quite in the spirit of a modern novel. The narrative is skilfully managed, and the absence of confusion where so many people are introduced is rather remarkable. Of the incidents, the most interesting to us is the one of the sleeping potion, though we really cannot say how many hands it passed through before it reached those of Shakespeare, nor whether Xenophon was the original author of it. There is something a little like

it in the *Babylonica*; but there the sleep is due to accident, not to design. Character, in the sense in which we use the term of fictitious personages, neither of the lovers possess in the least degree; and we may warn the reader at once that this is not an article in which the Greek novelists deal largely. Their chief virtues are ingenuity of incident and occasional beauty of description; and for much more than this we must not look. We may remark some traces of Orientalism in the tale. The transfer of Anthia from one master to another, whose selfish motives are not developed at first, reminds us of a story told by Mr. Lane in one of the notes to his *Arabian Nights*. A man one day came to the Caliph Moawiyah to complain that he had been deprived of his wife. He had become poor through a bad season, and her father had taken her away from him. On his complaining to the governor of the district, he sent for the woman with the intention of restoring her, but found her so beautiful, that he determined to keep her himself. When the Caliph ordered him to give her up, he complied, but sent a letter predicting that the Caliph when he saw her would do exactly as he himself had done. Moawiyah did in fact make the attempt, but was just enough to give the woman her choice, who returned to her own husband. This kind of adventure is repeated to a great extent in the Greek novelists, though not quite in so piquant a form; and in the tales of Heliodorus, Longus, and Achilles Tatius, which we propose to take up in the next Paper, we shall have an opportunity of observing it.

MELEAGER.

The Dead Baby.

PORTION FIRST.

LEAN your wet face upon my breast,
 Dear wife, and on my strong love rest;
 Bring all the comfort that you can
 (As the small child did comfort us),
 By stealing to mine arms, and thus
 Appealing to my sterner man.

For now the little infant hands
 That served as stainless marriage bands,
 And caused the pleasing, teasing toil
 That kept us sure on steadfast soil,
 And taught us almost unaware
 A larger love through larger care,—
 Now those small hands no more can plead
 For union equal to their need—
 'Tis better that your woe at length
 Should lean upon my grosser strength;

And yet the pain and bitter smart
 That seem, dear love, to clothe your heart
 With a new charity divine
 Have only power to harden mine;
 My faith, when tried, is less than thine.—
 I lift up eyes to heaven, and say:
 Why take our little child away?
 Why will our little boy should die
 With one Spring's sunshine in his eye?
 Why hear us pray on bended knee,
 Yet rob us of our claim on Thee?

It seems so hard to lose him, dear,
 Just when he grew so lovely here—
 To let him leave us as he came
 Just when he learned to lisp your name!
 He was our Bible for a year.

He was a little common child,
 A little grieving baby-boy,
 Not fairer than the rest,—yet joy
 Came down from heaven when he smiled:

Common and human, yet more fair
To us than other children were.
We loved him for his innocent eyes,
We loved him for his pleading cries,
We loved him for the anxious fears
That caused us sleepless nights of tears,
We loved him for the pain he caused;
But when his heart grew cold and paused,
We folded hands, as if we knew
Love left us little more to do;
Turned faces from the sun, and thought
The bitterness our sorrow taught
Rent us asunder, passion-fraught;
And, hungering o'er the little one,
We thought our blood too cold to run
Out from the fireside to the sun,
In sparkles, as it once had done.

I watched you, darling, when the breath
Had darkened from the little face,
Comfort your bosom for a space
With tender offices of death.
You placed the little snowy gown,
And drew the cap more softly down
Over the face without a frown,
And wrapt the tiny clay-cold feet
Within the little winding-sheet,
And smoothed the gleaming golden hair;
And somehow, dear, the bitter care
Seemed to make music in your breast,
And hush it into dreamful rest.
Till, bending down, you touched the meek
And patient sleeper on the cheek,
And all the mother's buried bliss
Surged in upon you with the kiss;
When, helpless with your utter woe,
You swam towards me cold as snow;
And hung about me, while your pain,
Communing with my burning brain,
Brought back the love of other years
In a white trance of sighs and tears.

We were so happy, best of wives!
The quiet-current of our lives
In pleasant peaceful music played,
Caught sunshine in the very shade.

We were so happy, dear, that we,
 Made perfect in our just degree,
 Dreamed not that you, a mother bland,
 Bearing your jewel in your hand,
 Were swimming with it to a strand
 Where shadows fall and angels stand,
 To leave it there at God's command.

My darling, in this moment dire,—
 When Death lies white in yonder room,
 And we are sitting in the gloom,
 Watching the faces in the fire,
 Shut in from all the pitiless stars,—
 I mind of the days past o'er,
 The tiny frets and puny jars,
 Which only made us love the more
 Our little babe now gone before.
 For when our love should shudder down
 Behind the darkness of a frown,
 We somehow felt in either heart,
 When for the moment rent apart,
 That the sweet love we hid behind
 Some passing shadow of the mind
 Shone downwards, and in secret smiled
 Upon the slumbers of our child;
 And so, in turn, we learned to gain
 A sweet remorse within the brain,
 Which brought the sunshine and the rain!

He was a Peacemaker divine!
 Why does the sorrow which has power
 To shape your beauty to the hour,
 Sweeten your heart, yet blacken mine?

PORTION SECOND.

And was your sleep so sound last night,
 And he so near in calm forlorn,
 Dressed in his raiments snowy white,
 Ere laid so low to-morrow morn?
 And did you fancy, dear, that he
 Was sitting smiling on your knee?
 I scarcely slept at all. It seems
 So strange that you, who treasured best
 Our little baby gone to rest,
 Should sleep such sleep and dream such dreams.

The love that women seldom speak
 Perchance lies deeper than the weak
 Man's passion breathed in words of heat;
 And you, whose joy was calm and sweet.
 As Autumn lights in time of wheat,
 Are in your sorrow hushed and bowed
 To faith that wears a firmer form.

Far from the tumult fierce and warm
 Which makes me mouth my grief aloud,
 Thou movest as a quiet cloud
 Across a driving mist of storm.

Stand by the window here, and place
 Your hand in mine, and try to chase
 Those quiet shadows from your face.

The tiny fairies of the snow
 In cloudy squadrons waver slow,
 To some sweet musical refrain
 Supplied within the listening brain,
 Toward the tranced earth below;
 The skies are thick with driving mist,
 Smote by the sun to amethyst;
 The air is husht, the snowy fays
 Float swiftly past the eyes that gaze,
 And flash a dreamy peace intense
 Across the dim mesmeric sense.
 All is so sadly sweet and fair,
 The snow-clad earth, the moving air,
 That the lost babe whose name we bless
 Seems part of all sad loveliness.

But death is with us where we stand
 So close together, husht in awe;—
 Now pass within, and clasp my hand
 More closely with your own, dear.

Draw

The stainless curtains, raise thine eyes—
 Lo, there our little darling lies.

Careless to human eyes that weep,
 Calmly he sleeps his coffin'd sleep;
 With white clench'd hands and closèd eyes,
 Sweetly he sleeps, our pearl of pearls,
 And light in common with the skies
 Mingling with earth among his curls.

A remnant of the soul that fled
Ere morning broke and found him dead,
Unto his lips a half smile clings,
Like gold-down from a butterfly's wings.
I see in that calm face alone
Your tender fancy—'tis my own:
So calm he sleeps, rebuking sin,
 And paining down all petty doubt,
You think the snow-calm death within
 Is like the falling snow without?

And more. Nay, take your hand away,
You need no help from my rough clay;
Your sorrow is of God—you need
No help from any meaner creed.
Sweet wife, that patient grief of thine
Is nearer baby's soul than mine:
That patient grief that knows not speech
 Is like the chamber with its woe,
 And like the season of the snow—
And harmonises God with each.

CONCLUSION.

To-day our little one was laid
Within a place of peaceful shade;
The soft green grass and white snow keep
Our footprints o'er his quiet sleep—
But in the early April hours
He'll fill those footprints full of flowers.

A pleasant thought. The flowers shall bloom
In natural sequence from his tomb,
And fill the tracks that sorrow raises
With tender thoughts and prayerful praises—
The heart's forget-me-nots and daisies.

Is it not so, my darling wife?
His memory with our grief at strife
Will hush the tumult of our life.
Our hearts a calmer peace have found
Now he is laid beneath the ground;
He seems so far away, my dear,
So far away and yet so near—
He sleeps so deeply darkly down,
Yet is he near enough to hear
The children shouting in the town.

A bitter thought; that quite unmans
My soul, and mocks our tender plans
To keep his memory sweet and green
As if this death had never been:
It seems so hard to lose him, dear,
Just when he seemed so lovely here,
And looking forth in tears to-day,
To see the other children play
With roses on their cheeks,—while he
Is white as lilies on the wave!
(Comfort, sweet heart, be brave, be brave)
Ah! yes, it seems so hard to see
The little children run in glee
Between our shadows and his grave!

Yet comfort. If our shadows fall
Across the children in their joy,
They reach not him, our baby-boy,—
There where he sleeps, our all in all;
Our grief's dark shadows interpose
Between our earth and heaven, sweet wife,
But cannot reach his sweet repose.
It means that this our troublous breath
May lend a sadder gloom to life,
May shadow others with its strife,
But cannot reach the light of death:
The peaceful light which lies above
The little baby that we love,
And, falling on us unaware
(Here where we stand and try to cope
With sorrow that is not despair,
And lean on one another's hope),
Teaches a pain akin to prayer.

In this snow-white and sad December,
When we are sitting quite alone,
It seems a comfort to remember
The sweet lost joys that we have known.
So place your hand in mine again
(You need my help a little now),
And while I talk of loss and gain,
Of buried joy and present pain,
Keep this calm kiss upon your brow.

Do you remember, dear, the night
You first did place him on my knee,
And laught and clapt your hands in glee

Because I could not hold him right;
 And called me awkward in your joy,
 Then snatched him up, pretending fright,
 And showering kisses on the boy?
 And, dear, do you remember too
 How merrily I bantered you
 Because, when first his querulous eyes
 Began to notice us and smile,
 You praised his wisdom, held him wise.
 Beyond the statesmen of our isle?
 We often said, you know, that he
 Would be a statesman, sage, or bard;
 We little dreamt that he would be
 So soon, through trial keen and hard,
 A teacher wiser than the three.

'Tis over now. His face, placed far,
 Pathetic as the evening star,
 Shines down upon our earthly way:
 The face was marble yesterday—
 A common little thing of clay.
 Is it not strange that we should steal
 Our lost joys back again, and feel
 So much more calm and patient now
 Than when he lay in yonder room
 Amid the sorrow and the gloom,
 With our last kisses on his brow?

But God is good—in woe or bliss:—
 Your patient grief, O best of wives,
 At least has served to teach me this;
 And I believe, by this fond kiss,
 Death has bound closer our twin lives.
 If God our suffering hearts should bless
 With such another loveliness;
 If God, who took our child, dear wife,
 Should bless our lives with such another,
 I think his little angel-brother
 Will plead in heaven for his life!

God giveth His beloved sleep.
 He makes your sorrow calm and deep
 As this still season of the snow,
 As that calm churchyard with its woe.
 Let us not doubt, dear, while we weep!

For Nature is in unison
With death and with our little one;
And with the patient woe you keep
Hid from the sunshine of the sun.
His dust, communing with a light
From heaven, morning, noon, and night,
Will in the summer season bloom
In flowers that beautify the tomb;—
Your hidden grief, communing high
With a small angel in the sky,
Will bring forth blessings by and by;—
Thus will those fairy snowy showers,
Falling in sadly lovely hours
To the deep caves and granite bowers,
Commune with summer's secret powers,
And change to fairies of the flowers.

Is it not so? You bow your face
Upon my bosom, prouder, truer:
Come to my heart, then,—'tis your place—
And, praying prayers there, make me pure.

WILLIAMS BUCHANAN.

For Better, for Worse.

CHAPTER XIX.

FOR some weeks, Margaret Atherton had been uneasy at the weekly missives her Aunt Sarah sent of her Uncle John's health. Margaret had an indescribable longing to go to Wylminster to see him. She looked at her mother and Susannah, who were beginning to feel reconciled and happy in their new home. Could she leave them? Could she yet quite trust Rachel Grey, or Annie Morley, though she was daily putting them more forward, and encouraging them to take the responsibility of the school upon themselves? But no one would act independently while Margaret was there; and, in self-defence, she often assured Mr. Weldon there was no help for it, they would themselves drive her away from Deighton.

The fame of Deighton School, in spite of Margaret's precautions, was spreading far and wide; and Mr. Weldon, sorely against his will, had to bear meekly the credit of so great an advance in the educational mania of the present day. Margaret always contrived to slip away when visitors dropped in to look at the school. She said she had not bargained for being made a lion of, and therefore she thought she had a right to hide herself in her own territory, which, she stoutly declared, must be looked upon as forbidden ground. For a long time she had been wonderfully fortunate, Mr. Weldon deprecating all visits not made during half-holidays, when schoolmistress and children were away; so that 'time-killers' and 'curiosity seekers' had only the satisfaction of looking at empty benches and bare walls. One afternoon, in the midst of their work, a carriage, with the bright Oakley livery, drew up at the gate, and a party of ladies and gentlemen got down, and asked permission to look at the school. Mr. Weldon, who had just come from the schoolhouse, at once refused. "It was against the rules; he was sorry, but he could not give leave." Lady Elizabeth Thorpe was not so easily put off. She pleaded the distance they had come; the desire she had to learn from their success wherein her school failed. Mr. Weldon hesitated, stammered, made the best resistance he could, and was at last overpowered by the obstinacy of his annoying persecutors. "It is entirely against the rules, Lady Elizabeth," he said, in a tone only barely civil, as he very reluctantly lifted the latch.

"We will not interrupt you," her ladyship replied, in her softest tones. "We shall so enjoy listening to the way in which your children do their work." And firmly persuaded that the vicar stood in mortal fear of the governess, she followed him into the schoolroom.

Margaret was determined not to allow the children to be made puppet-shows of, for the mere gratification of idle curiosity. So she gave the

sign for them to put away their books and work; and in an instant, almost as if by magic, the little urchins ran trooping out on the green before the astonished guests comprehended the sudden movement. A half-suppressed smile crossed the face of the rector as he watched the manoeuvre, and Margaret's quiet stately manner as she just gathered up her belongings, and then disappeared into her own room. The folding-doors, however, had been fastened back to give air in the warm school-room, and Margaret was compelled to leave them open, subjecting herself to the annoyance of hearing and seeing all that went on between Mr. Weldon and his visitors. As the truth broke slowly upon her ladyship, her face flushed slightly. "This is a disappointment," she exclaimed to Mr. Weldon. "It was to hear them going through their work we came here. We don't care about the schoolhouse; our own at Oakley is far better,—a pretty Gothic ornamental building, not so shabby-looking and patchy as this is; but we wanted to get some hints as to your successful method of teaching, for I hear from all quarters what wonders you have accomplished since you changed your governess."

"Well, so far you have heard truly," Margaret could not help overhearing Mr. Weldon reply. "The governess certainly has a great deal to do with the matter. For instance, our governess is very positive; she won't be interfered with in her work, and won't give her lessons while there are strangers in the room."

"Oh, I see—keeps you a little in order, I suppose. Likes to show her power; knows that she is valuable to you. What a trying class of people they are to deal with! Why, I think we must have had a dozen in the last four years; and if they teach well, they give themselves airs, and think you cannot possibly do without them; and you must submit, or they leave you."

"Miss Atherton threatens to leave us," Mr. Weldon said, with a mischievous smile lurking about the corners of his mouth. "It will be a sorry day for us all when she goes."

"Do you think, Mr. Weldon, she would take the school at Oakley?" Lady Elizabeth asked. "We could not give her a very large salary; but the schoolhouse is so good, we always make that a set-off. Still, if I thought we could tempt her, I would not mind an additional five pounds."

Mr. Weldon was too annoyed even to smile; he felt himself growing quite hot, for he knew Margaret could hear every word that was said.

"There is no hope for you in that quarter, I am certain, Lady Elizabeth," he replied stiffly. "When Miss Atherton quits Deignton, she gives up her present employment altogether. We are too sorry ourselves to allow any neighbouring parishes securing her services, however tempting the offer."

Lady Elizabeth looked at the rector's hot angry face, and, like all imaginative weak minds, she at once jumped to the conclusion that there were reasons which the rector would not give for the governess of whom

he thought so much quitting her post at Deighton. She could see it all plainly now. No wonder they were not admitted; no wonder she was so cried up. Old men were often great simpletons. The governess was pretty, and certainly, though dressed plainly enough, had an air with her very unlike the rest of her class. Mr. Weldon would not be the first clergyman who had done a foolish thing in marrying the schoolmistress; and with a sick sister always on his hands, he had some excuse for acting foolishly in his old age.

Margaret would have given any thing to have been able to leave the room; but to do so she would have to pass the two younger ladies and gentlemen who had been attracted there by her aquarium, which it had given the children so much pleasure to assist her in stocking.

"Now I'll be bound this little river-garden has effectually put an end to fishing for minnows with crooked pins, and all the wicked devices young vagabonds are up to for tormenting God's creatures out of their lives. No wonder Deighton is rising in the scale of intelligence and civilisation, if ferneries and aviaries and aquariums form part of the education they get."

This was said in a manly straightforward way, and in a voice which instantly struck Margaret's ear as familiar to her. She had not looked up at any of the party; she was busying herself in folding up work at a little table beside her. She had not seen the start her name had caused in one of the two gentlemen, when Mr. Weldon had spoken of her as "Miss Atherton." She did venture now to glance at her tormentors. The lady who was speaking to Mr. Weldon was evidently, by the likeness, the mother of the two fat, fair girls who stood apart with the two gentlemen by the window. One of those two was as evidently, from the family likeness, a brother. He looked uneasy and out of place, and Margaret heard him declare, "It was too bad of his mother to force herself in on the school, annoying Mr. Weldon, when she knew it was against the rules."

His companion, who stood with his back to Margaret, evidently agreed with him; for, putting his arm into his friend's, he said very quietly, "Come, Thorpe, there is no reason why we should stay because your mother's curiosity is not yet appeased. Let us go; perhaps the rest will follow."

He turned slightly as he spoke, and gave one quick hurried look to where Margaret stood. Their eyes met for an instant only, and were as instantly dropped; but in that short mutual glance there could be no mistake,—in spite of Margaret's altered position, in spite of his sunburnt face, the dark thick moustache covering the upper lip,—they had each recognised the other. Margaret's whole frame shook as if an ague-fit had attacked her; she literally gasped for breath. She watched Mr. Weldon handing Lady Elizabeth into the carriage.

"Now really, Miss Atherton, these people are too bad," he exclaimed, as he came in, looking more chafed and angry than Margaret had ever seen him. "To be scared out of your own house and home in this way,

and your scholars dismissed, to gratify the curiosity of an idle woman, who does not know the value of time (unless it is any fresh scheme for killing it), is past endurance; and I am quite determined I will find out some means of guarding you from it in future, even if we keep them out with the aid of Chubb's locks."

Mr. Weldon would have given a great deal if he could have known exactly how much of the conversation had reached Margaret's ear, and to that he fully attributed the pale scared look which she still wore.

After Margaret had succeeded in dismissing Mr. Weldon, she had the inquiries of her mother to satisfy. Mrs. Atherton had watched the carriage and its gay liveries drive up to the school. She had seen the party alight, and, after their parley with Mr. Weldon, disappear within the schoolroom-door. She had watched eagerly to see them depart, and now she was all anxiety to know who they were? Where Oakley Park was? Did Margaret think it was intended as a call on her? Would it lead to an invitation? Margaret knew not which question to answer first, they came so thick and fast. "I am sure I cannot tell you, mamma, where Oakley is," she said; "some six or eight miles off, I believe; but as we are never likely to see it, it does not much matter."

"You are put out, my dear, at having to show yourself to people in your present calling. You understand now, Margaret, I hope, what I have all along tried to impress on you,—the awkwardness and incongruity of your filling a station so much beneath you."

"Indeed, mamma, you mistake me," Margaret said meekly; "I was dreadfully annoyed at Lady Elizabeth's persisting in forcing herself where she was quite aware she was not wanted, and saying things before me which she ought not to have done before any schoolmistress. As to calling on us, she was hardly likely to do that when her visit was to tempt me to go to Oakley as schoolmistress to their village-school."

Mrs. Atherton's cheeks grew scarlet. "That is just what I have always said it would come to," she exclaimed wrathfully; "you have played at being a schoolmistress until every body believes you are one!"

Her mother's words sounded in her ears as a bitter truth. Margaret could hardly repress her tears. "Perhaps I have, mamma," she said sadly,— "not played exactly, but worked and tried to do my best; fancying that every one would understand my reasons for doing so, without feeling I had lowered myself in the estimation of the right-thinking. I have been spoilt, I fear, by Mr. Weldon's kindness and consideration for me. The fault is as much mine as his." She kissed her mother and went into her own room, and eased her throbbing head by a flood of tears—the first she had shed for a long time.

Margaret could do little the next day. In place of her usual smiles and bright cheering words to her little classes, the work dragged; she could not keep her attention, much less insure her pupils'; and feeling irritable and unhappy, she at last gave up the struggle, and resigned her place to Rachel Grey; contenting herself with pretending to work

in her own room, though any one might have observed how often it lay idly resting in her lap, while her thoughts were far away from the objects which surrounded her.

Mr. Weldon was vexed to see how pale and fagged she was looking, and mentally blamed himself for ever having allowed Lady Elizabeth to set foot within the schoolroom.

Rachel Grey had dismissed her scholars, and every thing was quiet and still after a busy day's work, when, while still sitting in her own room, Margaret was aroused by the sound of footsteps on the gravel-walk. Believing it was Mr. Weldon, and that he had some more last words to say before returning to the Rectory, she said, "Come in" to the tap at the door; and almost before she had ceased speaking the tall upright figure of a stranger stood before her, his shadow darkening the twilight in the low room in which Margaret sat. For a moment both were still; then Margaret arose, but her utter astonishment took away the power of words. The visitor seemed equally spell-bound. A woman's pride at last came to Margaret's aid. "I do not know to what cause I can attribute the honour of this call, Captain Vyvian," she said stiffly; "I had hoped the knowledge so unfairly obtained yesterday might at least have been held sacred. It was enough surely to have outraged all right feeling in forcing yourself on us then, without adding this visit to the account."

"It was to apologise for that unfortunate visit I am here now. Believe me, Miss Atherton, I was perfectly unaware of your being in these parts when I joined Lady Elizabeth in her drive yesterday. No power on earth should have tempted me within these walls, had I known to whom they belonged."

"I acquit you entirely," Margaret said, with the colour returning to her cheeks; "but I should have thought more of your regret if it had restrained you from repeating your visit."

Captain Vyvian put his hands on the back of a chair facing Margaret. She had sunk down on the seat from which she had risen on his entrance.

"I could not bear you should believe me capable of forcing myself upon your notice, of prying into your present mode of life against your evident desire. Whatever your previous opinion of me might have been, I knew I did not deserve the charge of such want of manliness or delicacy, and it was to assure you of this I have now come here."

"As I said before, you might have spared yourself," Margaret replied; "I did not, could not assure you; your start at the sound of my name convinced me you were taken by surprise. I repeat again, your visit now is unnecessary and uncalled for."

Captain Vyvian turned almost as pale as the trembling girl before him. "However circumstances may have made us strangers," he said, "you must believe me, Miss Atherton, I have long been painfully anxious to learn what had become of you since the Deanery was no longer your home. Finding you here so unexpectedly, you will, I trust, forgive

the question : Is it choice or necessity which has made you adopt your present mode of life ? For the sake of old memories, forgive the past enough to answer me this question."

Margaret rose up haughtily from her chair ; her eye glittered, and her lips were almost as white as her cheeks.

"Captain Vyvian, I have no old memories," she said sternly ; "it has been the business of the last five years to root them all out, and I must have succeeded poorly enough in the effort if a single one connected with you remained to me. But I will so far satisfy your curiosity as this,—that both choice and necessity have placed me here. Necessity, inasmuch as our means are lessened for a time ; and choice, as it better suits my taste and inclination than any other method of earning money I could hear of when I accepted this situation."

There was a pause. Margaret seemed to wait for any other question to be put to her. Her companion turned away to the window ; there was a strange troubled look in his face, and his eyes fell before the bright glittering gaze of the calm statue-like figure before him.

"Captain Vyvian," at length Margaret said, "you must be aware this is no place for you. I cannot receive strangers alone. I have satisfied your wishes, inasmuch as I have replied to your inquiries. We must now part ;" and, without moving from her place, she motioned to him to leave her.

"You are right ; we are strangers now," he replied, slowly and with visible effort. "I have no business here ;" and seizing his hat, with a hasty bow, and with no attempt to shake hands, he strode out of the door, and down the path into the street, as suddenly as he had come in.

Margaret stood like one stunned. When she awoke from the tumult of ideas which pressed upon her, a thousand fears tormented her. Had she been too harsh ? too unrelenting ? Had she not shown anger and mistrust, instead of merely common civility and cool indifference ?

The following morning found her on her way to the Rectory. She came there to tell Miss Weldon the news from Wylminstre was not good, and she believed it was now her duty to go and see her uncle.

"My brother will rejoice to hear your decision," Miss Weldon said ; "he is growing very anxious and nervous about you. He is sure you are over-worked, and require change."

Margaret smiled a wan, sickly smile,—it came amidst a flood of tears ; and for the first time since her residence at Deighton, she readily acknowledged she did.

CHAPTER XX.

Poor Margaret ! fears, perplexities, and annoyances seemed to meet her on every side. Her uncle's state of health was evidently serious. Aunt Sarah seemed from the first to have quietly realised the fact, and was thankful she was able to care for and nurse him, and, if it must be, bear the short separation which was in store for them.

The impending general election kept Wylminster, as it did other places, in a fever of political excitement; and Mr. Waldron, consulted by every body both in and out of office, entered into the spirit of the strife almost as eagerly as if he had not been caged up within the four walls of his sick-room. Margaret, while she was in Acre Lane, resumed her old occupation of reading the papers to her uncle, and in them the speeches of Sir Philip Leigh, whose oratory seemed to be startling the country to a knowledge that a new and unlooked-for star had arisen in the political horizon at a critical moment, when the old people fancied that talent had almost worn itself out.

"Just read that paragraph, Maggy," her uncle said one morning, pushing the newspaper across to his niece. "I don't often read the trumpery they fill papers with; but this seems to concern Ethelind."

Margaret took the paper, and read:

"Last night, for the first time since the return of Sir Philip and Lady Leigh from their lengthened continental tour, the noble mansion in Belgrave Square was thrown open to a select and brilliant assembly of the most exclusive families of the aristocracy. Carriages continued to set down for nearly two hours. The noble suite of rooms were beautifully decorated, and no expense had been spared in rendering it one of the most brilliant receptions of the season. The sensation caused by the loveliness of the youthful hostess, of whose beauty rumour had already said so much, far exceeded the highest expectation; and we believe we may confidently predict, that Lady Leigh will be the reigning attraction of the season."

"The fellow who wrote that stuff deserves to be well flogged for his pains," was Uncle John's commentary in his short, testy voice.

"I wonder what mamma will say to this when she reads it?" Margaret said. "I believe she would give any thing to see Ethel in her own house; and it does seem hard, I own, that Sir Philip should have separated her so entirely from her family."

"When a woman marries she must submit to her husband in these matters. Keep thy mother from the Leighs if possible, Maggy; she is sure to make mischief with her weak, silly tongue and want of tact. And now the poor child is married, it would be wrong to throw difficulties in her way."

"Then you do not think Ralph so wrong in throwing up his curacy, after all, uncle?" Margaret said. And Uncle John laughed, and declared he meant no such thing.

The next morning, Margaret, equipped for the walk Aunt Sarah would not excuse, came in to inquire if her uncle had any commissions she could execute. There was a cheque to be cashed at the bank before it closed; and thither she turned her steps. As she pushed open the heavy oak door, and entered the low, dark room, amidst a number of townspeople gossiping together,—as they always do in a country bank,—at the furthestmost desk, chatting to Mr. Graves, stood Guy Vyvian.

Instinctively Margaret hesitated, and her cheeks flushed; but recovering herself the next moment, with a quiet, self-possessed step, she turned to the younger partner, and delivered to him her uncle's message and cheque. As the precise, methodical man of business deliberately counted the notes, and gave them into Margaret's hand, by a sort of instinct rather than sight she knew the eyes of Captain Vyvian were fixed upon her. But she neither turned towards him, nor looked up; the next minute she felt, rather than saw, that he had quitted the bank. Margaret lingered on, chattering with Mr. Graves, and answering all his inquiries about her uncle, until she had no further excuse for stopping; and when she had regained the open street, and saw that not a single person was visible, with something between a sigh of relief and vexation she turned her steps homewards. "I tried to convince him that we must be as strangers, and it seems I have succeeded," she mentally exclaimed. "How hard it is to do one's duty steadily and unflinchingly! one fancies it easy enough until the effort has to be made. The reward, I suppose, will come in due time; but whether it does or not, it must be done;" and she turned into the open door of the cathedral, and stood beside the little flat stone in the centre of the cloisters, until the band of smiling, careless chorister-boys trooped past, warning her that Evening Service was about to commence. Following them into the choir, she turned into her old seat near the deanery-door.

"I must leave you to-morrow, Uncle John," Margaret said, as she sat by her uncle's side in the dim twilight. "I had a letter from Ralph this afternoon. Mamma, I find, stole a march on me after I left Deighton, and started off to Leigh Moss to see Ethelind. She was only just in time, though; for Sir Philip and Ethie came to town the next day. Ralph has heard of a curacy he thinks likely to suit him in Somersetshire; so he took mamma part of the way to Deighton, on his road there; and he begs me to meet him by the 8.10 train at Swindon to-morrow, on his return into Yorkshire."

"I am sorry to part from thee, child," John Waldron said; "but I should like thee to meet Ralph: a little conversation with thee will do him good, and thou wilt better understand his motives for leaving Leigh. I have been vexed at his quitting Leigh; but old people and young see things in such different lights, that perhaps I ought not to judge for him. I know what expenses changing a home entails, and I give him this cheque," he said, pushing a piece of folded paper into her hand; "it will help to make his difficulties less, perhaps."

CHAPTER XXI.

RALPH's tall figure on the platform at Swindon was the first which Margaret caught sight of as the London train pulled up; and bidding a porter take charge of her luggage, he hastened her up-stairs to a

quiet room he had secured for themselves, free from the inquisitive eyes and ears of the people who thronged waiting-rooms.

"We must make the most of our three hours," Ralph said; "I have lots to say to you, little sister."

And Margaret noticed, with little satisfaction, the look of care and anxiety on her brother's bright, handsome face.

"You ought to be very hungry," he said, pouring her out a cup of coffee. "Come, eat first, and then we will proceed to business."

Margaret laughed. "I cannot eat or drink," she said, "until I hear from yourself there is no help for your leaving Leigh Moss. I believe every body who knows any thing about it at Wylminstre firmly believes you are mad."

"I am prepared for that, because it is purely a matter of feeling. No man can enter into another's difficulties, unless they have been similarly circumstanced. There are some things we must decide for ourselves, even if we thereby brave the opinion of the world. So long as Katie sees it as I do, I feel I am not called on to enter into explanations."

"And Katie does approve?"

"How could she do otherwise, Maggie? How could I get on in my parish,—independently of the Squire, who owns every acre,—even, if we had not been connected? How could I have my own relations about me, as a mockery of poor Ethie's feelings? How could I constantly meet Ethel as if we were utter strangers? No! the more I think it over, the more certain I am I am doing the right thing. The new home is my trial. Where is it to be? and what?"

"Have you not just been looking at a curacy?"

Ralph smiled. "A curacy!" he said, "I have seen nearly a dozen! But however, this one does not seem so very unpromising. Eighty pounds a year, and a large, inconvenient house. But it is a sole charge, and I can take pupils if I like. I think I must try it. The rector is old, and he seems easily satisfied, and in flourishing health. As soon as Katie is fit to travel, we must make the move."

"And now, Maggie," and he roused up from a reverie, "you must come and see our Yorkshire home. It will always hold a pleasant place in our memory as the first sphere of our married life."

"When Katie needs me, Ralph," Margaret said cheerfully. And then she proceeded to tell her brother of her visit to Wylminstre; of her uncle's altered health; her own fears about him; his thoughtful kindness to Ralph,—a gift so seasonable as to lift a load of anxiety from the heart of her listener.

Then they discussed Ethelind's compulsory estrangement from her own family; her so suddenly quitting Redenham, no doubt to avoid the visits of Mrs. Atherton; of the brave heart with which Grace had borne her disappointment, and the bright, loving spirit she had displayed during the whole of her long visit to her brother.

"And this Grafton Curacy, Ralph," Margaret said,—“it is to be hoped there is no Squire in the way there!”

Ralph laughed. “I took good care to ask that question to begin with. Grafton is not favoured with such an appendage—at least not one living near the place. But, Maggie, Mrs. Atherton tells me you intend leaving Deignton; she says you have at last been frightened out of the folly of pretending to be what you are not by some Lady Somebody, who persisted in mistaking you for a village schoolmistress.”

“I thought mamma would tell you some wonderful story of my conversion to her opinions, as she calls it,” Margaret replied, reddening a little even now at the remembrance. “Rude enough Lady Elizabeth was; but it would have required more than any thing she could have done to shake my purpose, had I not for some time felt my work there, as far as I am concerned, was nearly accomplished. Mr. Weldon knows, as soon as Rachel Grey can be left to herself, I shall go. But, Ralph, dear, who do you think was with Lady Elizabeth when she called at the school? No other than Guy Vyvian!”

Ralph started to his feet. “Guy Vyvian call on you, Margaret! Mrs. Atherton never mentioned his name.”

“Mamma knew nothing about it. On Guy’s part the visit was purely accidental. Indeed I do not think he recognised me, until my name, and then my profile, I suppose, betrayed me. His voice first enlightened me; I could not mistake that any where. I did not feel at all sure he had recognised me, until, later in the evening, when sitting alone in the schoolroom, he suddenly stood before me.”

“The rascal!” Ralph exclaimed angrily, the hot blood rushing into his face and kindling his dark eyes. “He would never have dared do it if he had not known you were unprotected. I trust, Margaret, you ordered him leave the house instantly.”

“I could not tell him to go; but my cold manner showed how unwelcome his presence was. I do not now remember what either of us said, though my spirit rose, and I felt I could have faced a lion. But oh, Ralph,” she added, sinking her head down upon her brother’s shoulder, and bursting into tears, “I never knew until after that interview how hard a battle I had been fighting with my own heart.”

“My poor Maggie!” and Ralph folded Margaret in his arms. “As if he had not sufficiently ill-used you, without forcing his presence on you when you were alone and unprotected!”

“You must not be unjust to him, Ralph,” Margaret replied, slowly wiping away her tears. “He only wanted to convince me he had nothing to do with Lady Elizabeth’s visit; and also, I think, to find out, if he could, the motives which induced me to be at Deignton.”

“And what did you say to him?”

“I cannot tell you; it was so sudden and unexpected it quite bewildered me, and it seems now like a painful dream. But that I succeeded in convincing him of the impassable gulf between us I have had ample

proof. I saw him again yesterday, in the bank at Wylminstre, and we met like utter strangers."

"At Wylminstre?"

"Yes! I knew he was in the town, because he had seen and talked with Aunt Sarah, and quite won her good-will by his inquiries for all our family. She asked him to call in Acre Lane. The fear of his doing so hastened me away."

Time sped on. Not a moment had been wasted since the brother and sister met; and when at last they parted from each other, they each looked the brighter and happier for the short communion they had enjoyed.

CHAPTER XXII.

CURLED up in her corner of the railway-carriage, scarcely heeding the high spirits of Barbara, or the sharp repartees she and her brother enlivened each other with during their long journey, Ethelind had plenty of time for her own reflections.

As regarded her own family, she had quite resolved to give them up. Any intercourse, under present circumstances, was worse than useless; and while it could not add to their or her comfort, it only chafed Philip, and gave his mother and sisters a greater hold over him. In London they would be free from family collisions, such as had marred her happiness at Redenham, and she would give herself up to Philip's wishes, and try if she could not, by so doing, win back his old love.

Ethelind's uncommon style of beauty soon became the theme of conversation at the clubs; and Philip, as his eyes involuntarily followed her, and saw her—perfectly graceful and self-possessed—entering with the freshness of an unspoiled mind into animated discussions with clever men whom women held in awe, or in a simple, quiet truthfulness defending her own opinions against those who were esteemed great authorities, felt his nervous doubts had been uncalled for, and that he might safely trust his young wife to take her own place in society, without fear of the criticisms which had always exercised such a powerful influence over his otherwise strong mind.

And this first introduction to a new life was not without its charms to a young girl to whom every thing was fresh and new. But in spite of the long lectures she received from her stately mother-in-law, or the laughing raillery of her husband and sisters, she could not submit unrepiningly to the almost total separation from Philip which his political duties exacted. With the exception of attending her to her first "drawing-room," and occasionally dropping in to her opera-box a few minutes before the fall of the curtain, or rushing home from some committee of the "House," barely in time to dress and receive the guests he had specially desired her to invite, life to Ethel, as far as Philip was concerned, had nearly become a blank. But this was the inevitable lot of wives of public men,—at least so she was constantly assured by Philip's mother and sisters; so it was

only to be borne in the best way she could devise, patiently waiting for the breaking-up of Parliament, when, with time and leisure on his hands, her husband, she hoped, would once more devote himself to home and its pleasures.

"You are early to-night," Ethel exclaimed, as Philip came into the drawing-room where she was at work; "Barbara assured me just now the House was not expected to break up till very late to-night."

"So every body imagined; but the ministry found themselves unexpectedly in a minority soon after the House met, and the Premier is gone off to consult her Majesty: of course the House broke up. It has made no end of commotion. Has Stephens brought in the evening's papers?"

"Yes; they are on the table beside you," Ethelind said; and then she rested with her needlework in her lap, and wondered how people could be so excited by politics as her husband's family were, wishing, for his sake, she could feel as enthusiastic as Barbara did.

For some time Philip was entirely absorbed in his paper; then suddenly looking up, he asked Ethelind if she had not some relative or connection a leading man at Wylminstre.

"I have not," she said, "but Margaret has,—old Mr. Waldron, the banker. Why? What makes you ask the question?"

"Only that every one agrees in thinking that Lord L—— will try the effect of a new Parliament before he resigns office. In which case, we must strengthen his hands as much as possible. Redcar tells me, if he could secure the interest of one or two influential men at Wylminstre, he thinks he has a very fair chance of a seat for the borough; at all events, it is worth a trial. I mean to run down with him, and see what can be done. How is one to secure this man's interest, do you think?"

"What man? Mr. Waldron, do you mean?"

"Yes; this uncle of Miss Atherton's."

"You forget he is a Quaker; you might not like to have any thing to do with them."

"Oh, never mind that; in politics one overlooks all minor considerations. If he is a good fellow, and answers our purpose, it does not signify what his creed may be, or the cut of his coat, for that matter. We must contrive to surmount that difficulty."

"But Mr. Waldron has some very strong prejudices; and if he should not happen to agree with Lord Redcar's opinions, and should oppose you?" Ethel said nervously.

"Then we must fight the battle out between us, that is all," Philip replied coolly; and he went on again with his paper. Presently he looked up, and asked abruptly, "Where is your sister now, Ethel? She seems to exercise great influence over all her family. Do you think, if you wrote to her, she would help us?"

Ethel looked up in astonishment. "You forget," she said, "that I have not written to Margaret since I married. I have, at your wish, care-

fully avoided any intercourse with my family; I could not let my first letter to any of them be about politics."

Perhaps Philip's conscience accused him; he did not attempt to meet his wife's eyes, or notice the colour which dyed her cheeks.

"It does not signify," he said; "if you object to write to Miss Ather-ton, I suppose we must find some other way of going to work. I only thought you might have been glad of any chance of renewing your correspondence with your own people."

"Not in that way, Philip," Ethelind replied indignantly, for the cool manner in which her husband tried to make a convenience of her family ruffled her temper more than any thing which had occurred between them. "You yourself forbade my writing to or thinking of them; and, hard as it has been to resign them, I have done so for your sake. You would not seriously ask me to expose myself to their just condemnation for the mere sake of politics, which I neither understand nor care about. Gladly as I would accept your offer, on almost any terms," she added, with tears in her eyes, "my first letter to Margaret must not be a political one."

"If you are not political now," Philip replied, "you must learn to be before long. If the ministry should weather out this storm, it is more than probable I shall be offered a seat in the Cabinet. In that case, you must fulfil your part of the duties: receptions, entertainments, applicants to receive, suing, through you, for your husband's patronage. Needy politicians, and aspiring wives and daughters, will crowd round you, and beset you; and it will be your place to carry yourself in such a manner towards them all, as shall most conduce to your husband's peace of mind, under his trying duties and hard work."

"Then why engage in it at all?" Ethelind asked mournfully. "You do not want place; you have all you can desire, Philip, and honour at such a price cannot be worth the labour it will cost you."

"Suppose every man thought as you do, Ethel, what would become of the country? Wait a year or two, and I will answer for it you will make as good a minister's wife as Lady L—— herself. An interest in politics depends very much on ourselves. Read the clever leading articles in the daily papers, listen to the arguments wise men urge and argue, and an interest springs up in the breast of every man or woman, which, depend upon it, is the source of that patriotism that so distinguishes England from the whole world beside.—I seem to have alarmed you, Ethie," he added; "but what will you say when I tell you, in the strictest confidence, remember, that I have already been offered a seat in the House of Lords?"

It would be unnatural to suppose Ethelind, young as she was, totally insensible to the ambition which, in more or less degree, is innate in every breast. And Philip watched with a quiet smile of satisfaction her visible start of surprise, and then the deep bloom which spread over her neck and face.

"You are not trying to play on my credulity, are you, Philip?" she asked.

"In simple truth, I mean what I say. Lord —— offered me to-day a seat in the Lords, by any title I liked to name. I have eight-and-forty hours given to accept or decline."

"And the title?" Ethelind asked.

"There can be no question about that," Philip replied; "the same my ancestors bore will serve me. In fact, it is but the restitution of a forfeited right that I would accept. I could not have listened for a moment," he said proudly, "to the offer of any new creation, such as is enacted by mere monied or political interest. In my case it is only a question of restitution to an old and well-earned right, which no man, when it has been so freely offered, has a right to refuse."

"Earl of Redenham!" Ethelind said slowly, as she came up to her husband's side, and laid her hand on his arm. "It is a pretty title, and an old one, I suppose. But I think I am glad you were only Philip Leigh when you married."

Philip laughed. "You silly little thing," he said, "would you try to cheat yourself into a belief that a countess's coronet would have made you refuse me?" and he stooped down and kissed the white forehead resting against his arm.

"I did not mean that exactly," Ethelind replied; "but no idea of your wealth or your position influenced me. I could have loved you just as well had you been without a name or a belonging—"

"A real case of love at first sight, eh, Ethie?" and he put his arm round her waist and drew her closer to his side.

"How pleased they will be in Eaton Place!"

"Yes, it will gratify my mother and sister's ambition, which has always been more aspiring for me than my own. My great trouble is about Ann. Poor soul, it will be a blow to her, I fear; but she will exercise her usual self-sacrifice, and we shall hear nothing from her but warm congratulations; but I would rather it had not come upon her through me."

It was very seldom Philip alluded to his cousin, and when he did there was always something in his manner which, while it puzzled Ethelind, forbade her asking any questions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Two days later the announcement of the Redenham Peerage appeared in the *Gazette*. Ralph Atherton read it in the paper, while the bells of the old church at Leigh-Delamere rung out their most joyous peal. And Margaret read it aloud to the delighted Mrs. Atherton and Gracie as they all sat round the tea-table in their tiny parlour at Deighton. And John Waldron threw down the *Times* newspaper with one of his expressive grunts, and deliberately took off his spectacles and rubbed them bright

in his coat-tail before transferring them to his pocket, wondering in his sober mind what inducement a man could have for accepting such a doubtful honour, when he already possessed every thing else which wealth and position could give him, and deciding satisfactorily to himself that it must have been the influence of Ethelind, who had doubtless inherited her mother's weak ambition, and whose little thoughtless head had been turned by the absurdities of that gay world into which, without any preparation, she had been so suddenly thrown.

A fortnight later, as Lady Redenham was returning through Hyde Park from an early drive, she came upon the conspicuous figure of a Quaker lady, tripping along the broad walk beside the Serpentine; the freshness of her subdued colour-silk dress, in its straight close folds, gathered up so as to display the white dimity petticoat and the snowy stocking; the large Norwich shawl, and the stiff drab bonnet, with its deep cardboard poke, throwing into shade the prominent features and bright intelligent eyes, which could belong to no one but Margaret's Aunt Sarah; at whose eccentric and unchanging dress Ethelind had so often laughed, and of whom in her heart she had always stood in great awe.

Remembering Philip's anxiety for an introduction to Mr. Waldron, Ethelind instantly pulled the check-string, and, to the no small astonishment of her well-bred servants, desired to be put down by Miss Waldron's side. Poor old lady! when she a little recovered her surprise, and Ethelind had succeeded in persuading her to return with her for an early luncheon to Belgrave Square, they seated themselves in the carriage, and the order "home" was given.

"Thou wilt wonder what can have brought me here, I dare say," she said to Ethelind; "but just now it is our yearly meeting, and the confinement is rather hard work for an old woman like myself; and feeling this morning as if a little fresh air and sunshine would do me good, I played truant, and came as far as Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park for a stroll among grass and green trees. But I hope to get back in time for the evening meeting."

"I will take you myself, Miss Waldron," Ethelind said, "after I have given you a luncheon. I am so glad I met you; I am sure, after such a long walk, you must require rest and refreshment."

Time had been when Ethelind would have shrunk from an hour's tête-à-tête with Margaret's stiff and very plain-spoken old Aunt; but her long abstinence from home-news, and her desire to forward Philip's schemes if she could do so without compromising her own family, made her overlook all such fears now; and she sat by Miss Waldron's side, chatting as freely as if she had been Margaret herself.

The old lady followed Ethelind into her morning-room, and took off her bonnet and smoothed her neat cap over her gray hair, and gazed on the luxurious apartment; and then, drawing Ethel to her side, imprinted a warm kiss on her cheek. "With so much around thee, dear,

to make thy heart cling to this world," she said, "thou must not forget that riches bring with them great responsibilities. Though thou art but a young wife and mistress, it is well to bear in mind that there are many things better worth living for than the pleasures or applause of this world."

"I think of it often, Miss Waldron," Ethelind replied meekly; "and I often long to share my comforts with those who do not possess them. But there are some difficulties," she added with a blush, "which I suppose every wife experiences when she first enters her husband's family. I cannot, and perhaps I ought not, to explain them to you; but I think, at least I hope, that Philip's prejudices are giving way, and then I trust I shall be able to have my own family about me."

"I am not sure, dear, that it would be desirable for Grace to be much here," Miss Waldron said, looking round her. "Grace is easily led away, and she has not the same steadiness of purpose which Margaret inherits from her mother. I am not sure it would be right to fill her mind with ideas or hopes which could never be realised. It would only unfit her for her own sphere of usefulness. Now Margaret would be a great help to thee. I wish thy husband knew our Margaret!" the old lady said, firmly believing her favourite niece could combat every difficulty in Ethel's way.

"Before very long you will see Philip at Wylminster," Ethelind ventured to say; "he wishes very much for an introduction to Mr. Waldron. Lord Redcar, who is trying to get in for Wylminster at the next election, has heard that Mr. Waldron has great influence in the town."

"My brother is but a poor invalid," Miss Waldron replied; "but I am sure, for thy sake, dear child, he will see thy husband. I must not promise his interest in favour of any one, until he is sure their views on political matters would agree; but he has read with great interest thy husband's speeches, and will be very glad to make his acquaintance."

Ethelind smiled at the old lady's caution; but she had gained her point,—and the only one which concerned herself; and, with a light heart, she led her guest through her long suite of rooms, and showed her all the pretty things which adorned them, and, after a hot luncheon, ordered the carriage, and drove with her to the narrow little entrance of that long stone-passage in Bishopsgate Street leading to the sombre amphitheatre which, during the bright month of May, is crowded by "Friends," young and old, who throng up to London, from their far-off country homes, to discuss the business of the Society at their annual meeting.

Many an inquisitive glance was cast upon the gay equipage which stood at the low archway, while Aunt Sarah bade an affectionate "farewell" to Lady Redenham. Many a young man ("Friend") or fair girl, in her delicate dress of pale-coloured silk, trusting entirely to her unadorned simplicity for that admiration which not even the Quaker training for generations can entirely subdue, turned again to get a second

look at the lovely young creature who was so earnestly listening to Miss Waldron's parting words.

"Dear child," she said, "I am very glad we have met; and I thank thee for not passing by an old woman. Thou art surrounded by many luxuries thou couldst hardly have dreamed of in thy father's lifetime. Take care that they prove blessings to thee, and not snares. 'Where much is given,' we are told, 'much will be required.'"

"Dear Aunt Sarah!" Ethelind mentally exclaimed, as she gave the order "home," and sat back in the carriage, listlessly gazing on the throng of vehicles and pedestrians streaming continuously through the narrow streets of the city; "how I used to dread and dislike her at Wylminstre, and yet how kind she is, and what good her bright face and loving words have done me! I have actually secured an introduction for Philip, and perhaps opened a way for communication with my own people."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE heat of London and Ethelind's white face induced Philip to take her down to Redenham before the close of the London season. A few days, it was thought, would bring the session to a close. Quiet and country air were becoming absolutely necessary for her; and in the course of a week or ten days Mrs. Leigh and her daughters were to follow her into Yorkshire, while Philip ran down to Wylminstre with Lord Redcar.

Grace had been at Deighton for some weeks, and Margaret was to go down to Leigh Moss directly she received a summons from Ralph.

As matters now stood, Ralph did not choose that Katie should call at the castle; so he only left his and her card at the door, when he knew that his sister had gone out for her daily drive. It was a large house for one solitary inhabitant; but as rest and quiet had become absolutely necessary to her, Ethel rather enjoyed the novelty. Among other employments, she determined to carry out her scheme of putting Ann Leigh's rooms into proper order for her visit to them; and as Old Martha was her only available authority, she was taken into consultation on the matter over which Ethel had become quite eager.

"And a fine lot of trouble you are taking, my lady," Martha said. "I am sure, if Miss Ann did but know about it, she would be very grateful, poor dear heart! for she always is so thankful, Mrs. Edwards says, for all that's done for her,—as if it was not a real pleasure to work for any body so good and gentle as she is."

"And when it is all ready, I shall write and beg her to come to us," Ethel said. "Mrs. Leigh thinks she will not do so; but I cannot believe, when I tell her her old rooms are prepared for her, she can refuse me."

Martha shook her head. "O my lady," she said, with tears in her eyes, "if it would do any body good, Miss Ann would come, even if it broke her own heart. But when you think she has never set foot with-

in the old walls since the day she left it, after my poor old master died; that then she lost, as you may say, at one blow, father, brother, and husband,—you can't wonder much at her being loth to return."

"I never heard she was to have been married?" Ethel said inquiringly. "To whom, then, was she engaged?"

"I wonder, my lady, you never heard; but there! I don't know well how you should,—the family are uncommon proud, and reserved like; and I have heard Mrs. Edwards say scores of times, they never could bear to have people talking about their concerns; and the story died away, out of mind, as you may say."

And Martha stood turning about the hem of her apron, forgetting, in her interest for poor Ann Leigh, she was transgressing the very rule which was so imperative a one in Lord Redenham's family. Neither did it strike Ethelind for a moment she should not inquire further of the garrulous old servant; she felt glad to learn any particulars of the sad fate of that new cousin, whose genial warmth of heart had struck her so forcibly when first contrasted with the want of sympathy or love in her husband's mother and sisters.

"From their cradles almost, as one may say, Sir Philip—I beg your pardon, my lady, the Earl I ought to say—and Miss Ann were engaged to be married; and doatingly fond of one another they were, I have always heard tell. Leastways, Miss Ann was of Sir Philip, I know. But after that accident, when our poor young lady got so ill and crippled, the marriage was put off. Several stories were told about it; some said one thing, and some another; but Mrs. Edwards, who knew the rights of it all, maintained that for a long time Sir Philip (the Earl, I mean) would not give Miss Ann up, though she, poor soul, persisted he should not be tied for life to a poor cripple. Be it as it may, ten years Sir Philip kept single; and, to my mind, if he had not met with you, my lady, he would have been so to his dying day."

Happily for Ethelind, it was too dark for Martha to see the effect of her communication on her white face. She dropped her curtsey, and left the room.

Ethelind threw herself back in her chair, with a feeling of such unutterable agony as she had never before experienced. The mystery concerning Ann Leigh was now unravelled by the simple straightforward honesty of Old Martha, who could have no purpose whatever in deceiving or misleading her. And Ethelind, who until now had been believing herself the idolised wife of her husband, suddenly jumped to the conclusion that through happening to possess a pretty face she had been made the victim of a marriage of convenience for the sake of an heir to the estates, and for which her compensation was to be the luxuries of unbounded wealth, and an ungracious acceptance into her husband's exclusive family circle.

How long she sat there she never knew. But Valerie found her, as the evening closed in, pale and cold, just as Martha had left her two hours before.

"*Mon Dieu!* my lady, how cold and ill you are looking! Do let me give you a little of this eau de Cologne, and wrap you up in a shawl;—or, better still, will you go to bed? You had better go to bed," she added anxiously, as she saw her mistress shaking as if she were in an ague-fit.

"Yes, I will," Ethelind said, in a dreary, strained voice. "I do not think I am very well." And she gave herself up to Valerie's care like a tired child.

And by a bright fire, and covered with blankets, Valerie sat and watched the still shivering Lady Redenham, as she lay with closed eyes, only answering in a low weak voice when spoken to. Poor Valerie! what would she not have given to have transferred her responsibility on any other shoulders; but Mrs. Blake only laughed at her fears, and declared "that fine ladies always gave themselves airs! Poor people did well enough at such times; and why should not Lady Redenham? It was standing about gossiping with old Martha that had tired her—and it served her right, too! What business had a lady to gossip with under-servants?"

Poor, innocent, unconscious Martha could give her lady little help. She could only suggest that, in her anxiety for poor Miss Ann, she had over-tired herself, and that a night's rest would do her good; and so she and Valerie determined, by the advice of Stephens, who had instantly despatched Roberts for Dr. Smart, to sit up in the dressing-room; and he himself telegraphed to Lord Redenham.

CHAPTER XXV.

It was a warm evening in June. Ralph Atherton, with one great load lifted from his heart, and the strange new feeling of parental love and pride glowing in his bosom as he looked at the little blinking eyes and fat, soft, downy cheeks which peeped out of the bundle of soft muslins and lace, over which Nurse Brown had grown quite eloquent, was wondering by what train Margaret could reach them that evening, when sounds of suppressed voices in the kitchen aroused his attention. The door of the study was opened, and Charlotte's face put cautiously within the door.

"If you please, sir, Mr. Roberts is here from the Castle; he wants to speak to you directly, if you will see him. He says Lady Redenham is taken ill, and the Earl is away."

Two long strides brought Ralph into the kitchen, where, white with fright, and great tears running down his rough face, Ethelind's favourite groom begged that Mr. Atherton would "please to go up instantly to the Castle, if he wished to save his 'lady's' life." She had been taken suddenly ill, he said; he himself had fetched a doctor from Leigh, and they had telegraphed for Lord Redenham. But Mrs. Blake would do as she chose, and wanted to keep Valerie and old Martha out of her ladyship's

room; and they all knew that their lady could not bear to have Mrs. Blake near her. I have got the ponies and carriage here, Mr. Atherton," Roberts added imploringly. "We sha'n't be ten minutes going, sir. For our lady's sake, for God's sake, do come back with me!"

"Wait one moment, until I have seen Mrs. Atherton, and I will go with you," Ralph said. And, trying to look cheerful and calm, he strode up-stairs to Katie's door.

"Katie, darling," he said, stooping down over his half-dozing wife, "Ethel's time has come, it seems, before she was quite prepared for it. She has no nurse with her, or any one but the doctor who understands these sort of affairs. Could you manage to spare nurse for one night? Charlotte and Harriet are here, and will take care of you and baby for an hour or two, while I take Mrs. Brown up to the Castle. I will return directly I learn how she is, and let you know."

"We both hope to sleep all night. Take nurse, by all means. I am only too glad to be able to help Ethel at such a time. Do not leave her until Philip comes. I shall do very well." And Katie kissed her husband, and closed her eyes to set Ralph's mind quite at rest on her account.

Before poor Mrs. Brown had recovered her astonishment, or had half shaken into her bonnet and cloak, Roberts had dashed over the broad road, and up to the Castle; and Stephens, with a blank face of dismay, could at first only answer Ralph's inquiries by a deep-drawn sob.

"Thank God you are come, sir, and for your bringing Mrs. Brown. But my lady is very ill, and we are all at our wits' end. Dr. Smart has just sent James for another medical man from Leigh, and he has positively forbidden Mrs. Blake's going into my lady's room. But if you will walk up into the ante-room, sir, I will tell Valerie to let Dr. Smart know you are here."

In a few minutes Dr. Smart came in.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Atherton; and Lady Redenham's maid tells me you have been thoughtful enough to bring Nurse Brown with you. I fear we are sadly inconveniencing Mrs. Atherton; but, upon my word, I am dreadfully in want of some such efficient help. The women here are all terrified out of their wits; and that old fishwoman of a housekeeper is only fit for Billingsgate, and will be the death of Lady Redenham if she goes to her."

"And Lady Redenham herself—what of her?"

"Her ladyship is certainly very ill. As yet there is no actual danger; but she is exhausted, and her pulse so feeble, that the responsibility is very great, especially in his lordship's absence. However, with Mrs. Brown's assistance, I hope we shall weather through it. But of course you won't leave us till the worst is over. It was well Mrs. Atherton could spare you both to be here."

Ralph wandered restlessly up and down the room, looked at the pictures on the walls with a vacant abstracted gaze, hardly comprehending

their subjects, and listening anxiously for every sound that reached him from the inner room.

The hours passed slowly on. Morning broke; and the gray dawn crept in through the thick velvet curtains of the great Oriel windows. The clock, with its deep silvery tones, had just struck six, when the feeble wail of an infant's cry broke on Ralph's ear, and the door opening gently, Mrs. Brown walked in, with a tiny bundle of flannels in her arms.

"Oh, sir," she exclaimed, "I am so glad you are here still! I was afraid you would have gone home to look after Mrs. Atherton."

Nurse just unclosed the wrapper for Ralph to get a peep. He had laughed at the tiny dimensions of his own flourishing boy when good Nurse Brown had first laid the little fellow in his arms; but any thing so small and fragile as Ethel's child, bearing the stamp of humanity in its little pinched-up features and pitiful little wail, he could not have believed possible.

"If you will take it from me a minute, sir, I will send in my lady's servant, and go back to Dr. Smart;" and placing the tiny morsel in Ralph's great arms, Mrs. Brown disappeared into Ethel's room.

There Ralph stood with the little heiress of those broad acres in his arms, her breath wavering and flickering between life and death, as he gazed anxiously on its lined little face; while his own big, handsome boy, bigger and broader than the generality of babies at his age, heir to nothing but his father's cares and uncertain, doubtful future, lay sleeping quietly at home on his mother's arm. Valerie soon appeared to relieve him of his charge, and Dr. Smart ran in for a moment to see how it was going on.

"I must not quit my post for long," he said, "but I thought I would just give a glance at the little lady. It has been a sharp matter for the poor young mother, and even now I cannot say she is out of danger. I wish the Earl had arrived, to tell us what to do; I do not understand our having received no telegram." And with a more anxious heart than he liked to acknowledge even to himself, Dr. Smart went back into Ethel's room. The next moment Stephens beckoned Ralph into the corridor.

"Miss Atherton is here, sir."

"My dear Margaret!" Ralph exclaimed joyfully, "next to Lord Redenham, I would rather welcome you than any other creature living!"

"Katie insisted on my coming. I reached your house just after you left, and then by break of day I came on here. But tell me,—is Ethel out of danger?"

Ralph led his sister up-stairs; and Margaret, on her knees beside the little baby, listened to Mrs. Brown's whispered account of Lady Redenham. There was something in Margaret Atherton's quiet, self-possessed manner which instantly inspired confidence in those who came in contact with her. Nurse Brown, Valerie, Dr. Smart, were all equally affected by it;

and an immense load seemed at once removed from the worthy man's shoulders when he could let nurse go, with the satisfactory assurance he could install Margaret in her place.

As Margaret followed the doctor into Ethel's room, she could scarcely recognise the bright happy young girl she had parted from two years ago in the colourless cheeks and closed eyes of the extended form before her. Her long, bright hair lay tangled upon the pillows, on which her white face rested, and Dr. Smart was assiduously administering stimulants between her half-closed, colourless lips.

Hour after hour passed away; neither Dr. Smart nor Margaret quitted their posts in the sick-room, until, as evening again drew on, the good doctor joyfully assured Margaret the crisis was past, and with proper and judicious care and nursing, there was no reason why Lady Redenham should not do well.

During that long day Ralph had never rested. Under the directions of Dr. Smart, he had himself procured the services of a competent nurse for Ethel, and a young married woman at Leigh, the sister-in-law of Philip's own man, whose infant, only three weeks old, had just died.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"I wish Philip would come," Ralph said impatiently, as he and Margaret stood counting the minutes on the little pendule over the chimney-piece. "I don't know what he will say to us for what we have done. He is just the sort of fellow to take offence at our interference, though I don't know how poor Ethie would have fared without us. Has she ever asked for Philip, do you know, Maggie?"

"Not once," Margaret replied, "though I have several times seen her eyes wandering round the room, as it in search of some face she missed. Indeed she has hardly spoken at all. Once she called 'Margaret;' and when I went to her, she threw her arms feebly round my neck, and hid her face in my bosom; and when I told her I hoped Philip would soon be here, she started at the name, but never looked up or spoke. Just now she asked in a faint whisper if she could not hear the cry of a baby; and when I told her it was her own, she inquired eagerly if it was a boy. On my telling her it was a little girl she made no remark, but turned her face away from me, and I thought I saw tears stealing from her eyes, though the lids were closed."

Again Ralph impatiently pulled out his watch, and calculated the arrival of the trains. Roberts had been at the station for several hours, awaiting his master's arrival; and every ear was anxiously bent on first recognising the sound of carriage-wheels.

Presently Valerie's eager face appeared at the door. "The carriage is coming, Mademoiselle. Miladi still sleeps. Who will meet Milord?" And the pretty little French girl evidently showed by her manner she hoped Margaret would undertake the office.

"I will go down and meet him," Ralph said; "you, Margaret, must prepare Ethel for his arrival;" and so saying he disappeared down the corridor. Lord Redenham was rushing up the hall-steps as Ralph reached the foot of the stairs. He was deadly pale; and grasping old Stephens' shoulder, he tried to articulate the question his trembling lips refused to utter. "Thank God, Lady Redenham is safe; the infant, too, though small, seems likely to do well." Philip staggered into the library, threw himself at length on the nearest couch, and burying his face in his hands, gave vent to his long-suppressed excitement and the sudden revulsion of feeling. Ralph stood quietly by, watching the heaving chest of the strong man; then he turned to Stephens, who was himself little less overcome, and begging that wine might be brought, poured out a glass, and almost insisted on his swallowing it.

"It is a cause of great thankfulness," Ralph said, "that the report is so cheering. Dr. Smart hopes, with care and freedom from all excitement, Lady Redenham will soon recover her strength."

"Fool that I was to leave her," Philip exclaimed bitterly. "But I knew nothing of these things; and my mother, who ought to have been more alive to them, never once suggested its being wrong."

"You might have had the advice of men better known than Dr. Smart had it occurred in town," Ralph said earnestly; "but you would scarcely have equalled, certainly not exceeded, the great skill and kindness displayed by him under very trying and responsible circumstances. Whether, my lord, you will think my sister or myself have taken more on ourselves than the occasion justified, I cannot tell. Our excuse must be, if we have erred at all, that it has been through our great love for Lady Redenham, and the helpless state she was in."

"Mr. Atherton," Philip said, "I cannot thank you; I cannot tell you how grateful I feel for your care of my wife. It has been a noble and generous revenge on your part."

The colour mounted into Ralph's cheeks. "You must not look on any little service I have rendered your household in their extremity in that light, my lord," he said quietly; "what I have done for you, as the clergyman of the parish, I should have done equally for the poorest of your people. But you must be anxious to see Lady Redenham; Dr. Smart is taking his first rest, after many hours of fatigue and anxiety; the nurse will be here in a few minutes to tell you when you may venture into Lady Redenham's room. In the mean time I will now wish you good-night, and return to the Rectory."

Philip paced impatiently up and down the room to recover his equanimity, when the door slowly opened, and Margaret, candle in hand, came into the library. She was in search of Ralph, to tell him Lord Redenham might venture up-stairs. They each started. Margaret spoke first.

"I beg your pardon, Lord Redenham," she said quietly, "but Lady Redenham knows you are come; and though Dr. Smart is not here, she has become so excited, I think it will do her less harm to see you at once

than to wait his leave." Philip rushed to the door. Margaret laid her hand on his arm. "Excuse me, my lord, but it is necessary you should be very cautious and self-possessed. Ethel is very weak, and the least excitement might produce fever. You must be prepared to see a great change in her."

In an instant, and without a word having passed his lips, Philip rushed past her, and staggered up the staircase.

"God help them," Stephens said, as he watched his master out of sight; "this is their first trouble. Maybe they will learn that we must all have them in this world, whether rich or poor;" and he turned away to wipe the tears from his old eyes.

Full half an hour Margaret remained in the ante-room, but Philip did not return. Becoming uneasy, and trembling at her own audacity, she first consulted nurse, and then gently opened the door and walked in. Philip was on his knees beside Ethel, his head bent over her white face, which was turned from him; large tears were falling over her wan cheeks from her closed eyes.

"It is time Ethelind had some nourishment," Margaret said anxiously. "This excitement, my lord, is not good for her." And Philip, unable to control his emotion, passed out of the room.

In less than an hour Ethelind had sunk into the first natural sleep; and leaving her in charge of nurse, Margaret passed into the outer room. Philip was standing over the fire, his elbow on the mantel-piece, looking the very picture of wretchedness and misery.

"What a fool I have been!" he muttered, as he paced up and down the room. "But I knew nothing about these things, and my mother never told me of danger, or on no account would I have trusted her alone in this out-of-the-way place. Miss Atherton,—for you must be Miss Atherton, I am sure, by your strong family likeness,—I do not know how you or your brother came here; but I shall always owe you a deep debt of gratitude for your care of Ethelind during my absence." Before Margaret could reply, Stephens came in to say Dr. Smart had gone down to find Lord Redenham.

During the following three weeks, Margaret, at Philip's earnest entreaties, continued at Redenham, devoting her time and energies to Ethelind, whose slow recovery and strange depression of spirits became a source of intense misery to Philip, and a mystery which Margaret in vain tried to unravel.

Except during their *tête-à-tête* dinners, in what Grace would have pronounced "very solemn state," Margaret saw little of her brother-in-law; but that little strongly prepossessed her in his favour, in spite of the prejudiced view Ralph continued to take of his character. When Mrs. Leigh and her daughters arrived at Redenham, though Philip urged her to remain and Ethie pleaded piteously that she would not leave her, Margaret vacated her post as nurse to her sister, and returned to the Rectory, to assist Ralph in the removal of his family to Grafton:

First-Fiddles and Top-Sawyers.

WHEN you take your little son upon your knee—the boy in tartan, I mean, with knickerbockers, and the shapely gaitered legs, and the long fair hair, not the smaller creature in the nursery, with the limited vocabulary and the ambiguous articulation,—when you inquire of the young gentleman what profession he will select for his future career, you may be sure that no especial modesty or want of self-confidence will appear in his decision. He will appropriate to himself an important rôle in the great drama of life. He will aspire to the grand and the distinguished and the lustrous. He will be a clown, or a lord mayor, or a life-guardsmen, or a harlequin, or a huntsman in scarlet leaping a five-barred gate. He condescends to no secondary or subaltern position. He will be a first-fiddle—a top-sawyer; not the humble player in the orchestra, with one eye on his music-book and the other on his *chef*, obedient to the beat of his bow, and all opinion as to correctness of *tempo* yielded to him; not the miserable underground labourer in the saw-pit with the bandage over his eyes, toiling as the top-sawyer directs. He is going to be chief actor, not a starveling supernumerary.

Perhaps we all start with these notions—bent upon being heroes; only the front ranks get filled up, and we are perforce contented at last to be quite at the edge of the fight—if out of the danger, also far from the glory. The world is not big enough for all its inhabitants to be great men, so some of us must be satisfied with being little ones. Society winnows us, and sorts us, and finds us a place somewhere. If the best boxes are full, we must take our seats in the upper circle, or the slips, or the pit, or the back of the gallery. After all, no one cares much where we go. As we know from the old joke that the play of *Hamlet* cannot be played with the part of Hamlet omitted, so also it cannot be played if every character is to be swelled to the importance of Hamlet's. There must be *valets-de-chambre* as well as heroes. We must have Horatio, and Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, and Osric playing their humble parts, and forming advantageous foils for the setting-off to the uttermost of the heir-apparent of Denmark. They must hope to be no greater than they are. It is not for them to shine, and strut, and extort applause, and listen to the music of cheering and congratulation, and bow acknowledgments before the green curtain. They have but to say, "Ay, my good lord," "No, my good lord," "E'en so, my lord," "It might, my lord," and other such miserable cues; never a grand, pompous, musical burst of poetry and philosophy,—“To be, or not to be,” or “Oh, that this too too solid,” &c. &c.; and they are shabby in cotton velvet while their prince is magnificent in silk and bugles.

I know that I have heard actors praised for making much of small

parts, but surely they were wrong in so doing. We don't want the little people made large; we object to have the "nothings monstered." In the case of Mr. Rosencrantz, for instance, no one requires that he should be important, or intellectual, or superb; he was simply to come on, and be patronised, and questioned, and scorned, and bullied. Let him endure this as comfortably as he may,—a subjective, not an objective, component of the play; standing in an agreeable attitude,—“at ease” as to his legs, his hat in his right hand, his left arm bent gracefully, and his left hand resting on his sword-hilt,—perfect in the words of his part, who would exact more from him? He is a background-figure, kept low in tone purposely to bring others out brilliantly. Why should he disturb the harmony of colour and composition by shining too splendidly?

Yet very likely Mr. Rosencrantz entered his profession with higher aspirations. The summit of his ambition was once something loftier than the correct rendering of one of those feeble toadying Danish gemini. Perhaps in his own heart he yet believes he could perform Hamlet to an applauding pit, would the opportunity only come to him. Perhaps he is mentally despising the royal Dane, who is theatrically despising him. I can't read such a thought in his face, which, to do him justice, is rather a hard sort of mask, very blue as to chin and cheeks from constant close shaving, rather burnt-corked about the eyebrows, and oh, with such hard-edged blots of raw paint under his eyes! Facially he is Rosencrantz, though mentally he may be many parts ahead; and to-morrow he is Shylock's friend Tubal; and the next night perhaps one of Lear's Sons-in-law, or a First Lord, or a Second Murderer, or a Third Gentleman, or a Doge of Venice, or an Archbishop of Canterbury, or a Duke of Norfolk, or what not human furniture of the drama. Somehow, he cannot come to the fore; he is fixed in one of the rear-grooves of the theatre; along that prescribed path he can slide easily enough, out of or beyond it he is forbidden to move. However much, like our young friend with the spruce calves and the knickerbockers, he may have panted to distinguish himself as lord mayor, or clown, or magnificent life-guardsman, to strut as Romeo, or swagger as Benedick, or rant as Richard,—it was not to be; he is to follow, not to lead. The premier violin is not an instrument he will ever play on; he will scrape away with the rest as they are bidden. He will never be the top-sawyer, but always the poor blinded machine gasping down below. Poor Mr. Rosencrantz!

And is my sympathy perfectly genuine? Do I really care much about that not eminent performer? or have I been merely pitying him parabolically, reflectively, with my thoughts and glances continually turning from him and resting upon a certain other person? Are my philosophical observations to be subjected to the strictest gauging? Suppose that I myself, full of the noblest ambitions, have somehow, owing to a train of circumstances upon the discussion of which I need hardly enter,—have somehow been forced into a long list of inferior parts; that in very many a race I have been what sportsmen call a “bad second,” or, still

worse, "nowhere;" that I have been fixed in post-scenium regions, while I have been longing to glitter before the footlights in the full view of the audience; that socially I am a Horatio, or even a Mr. Rosencrantz, and, for the life of me, notwithstanding my earnest longings and thorough convictions that I could play the part admirably, I cannot get cast for Prince Hamlet. And, then, to think that I should be perpetually performing Catesby to such a Richard! Horatio to such a Hamlet as Perkins! It is really exasperating, though of course, and I wouldn't have the fact questioned for one moment, Perkins is my friend, and I wouldn't be jealous of him or injure him in any way on any account. Certainly not.

Perkins is in the Civil Service. He holds a responsible post (so he tells me) in the Black Sealing-Wax Department of the Government Probate-Duty Office. He entered the service at the prescribed salary of eighty pounds per annum. It was before the days of competitive examinations; there were few fetters then upon the generous distribution of patronage. You carried your member's election, and soon after—really a most extraordinary thing, and so unexpected—your son was appointed to the Black Sealing-Wax Department. Certainly it was as well for Tom Perkins that he was not put through a course of searching educational inquiries; for though he is my friend, and a dear good fellow, I happen to know that for some time before his marriage he was in the habit of spelling 'affection' with one *f* only. I dare say his wife has set that all right for him now; but perhaps, had the peculiarity been disclosed by an examination, it might have disqualified him for the appointment. He has gone on to good fortune in the regular rotation of the service. He had his due rises of ten pounds a year, then his rises of twenty pounds. Perhaps he is nearly thirty years of age now, and he enjoys his income of a good three hundred, clear of income-tax, and the other little deductions for superannuation purposes which the Government providently makes from the salaries of its servants. I am told that he bears an excellent official character. He himself informs me that he works "deuced hard." "All a mistake you fellows outside make, I assure you, chaffing government clerks about nothing to do, and that. Quite a different sort of thing. The work's deuced hard, and responsible, and important, I can tell you. Enough to knock a fellow up." Of course I'm bound to credit this statement, though at the same time I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, that on nearly every occasion of my calling on my friend at his office, he has been either busy brushing his hair, or washing his hands, or eating his lunch, or reading the newspaper, none of which occupations can be fairly called laborious, or of vast political importance. I have witnessed sometimes his interviews with the public, through the railings at the top of a partition, on a sort of Pyramus and Thisbe plan. He keeps the public waiting a good deal, but comes to them suddenly when they are nearing a climax of impatience, and replies to their inquiries with a brisk yet affable independence of manner which appears to disarm complaint; while the shape and extent and general superiority of his whiskers secure for him, I

fancy, the credit of being a far more distinguished officer of State than he really is. I have made no scruple of disclosing the real position of my friend; for the fact is, the whole business has been made the subject of a blue-book, which, for a shilling or two, imparts to the nation full particulars touching its servants, their names, and standing, and incomes, and is indeed a valuable work of reference for the tradesmen who give credit in the neighbourhood of the offices of Government.

With every respect for Perkins, I am bound to say that he was not fairly entitled to play upon the first fiddle. He had no right to arrogate to himself that delightful instrument. I desire to speak with befitting modesty concerning myself; but, unless it may be in some small items of personal appearance,—such as whiskers, for instance,—I cannot admit the superiority of Perkins. I think I have often outshone him at tea-tables, when I give full flow to my conversational powers, while I know that he has beaten me at a ball. At this last entertainment, however, more depends upon neckcloth and shirt-studs and shiny boots, than upon merely mental qualifications. Yet I once thought myself a neat waltzer, too,—but we'll let that pass. I am not an assuming, a vain-glorious man; perhaps I have been, indeed, over-diffident and wanting in self-assertion. Perhaps I made no sufficient resistance when Perkins first appointed me to an inferior position in his orchestra, and then commenced to wave his baton; I ought to have refused to play then, if I ever contemplated refusal. But it was hard to know exactly when Perkins commenced to assert himself in this superior manner. I only discovered my situation when it seemed to be irremediable. I found that I was *fidus Achates* only,—a very excellent and praiseworthy man, no doubt; but we all know that *pater Æneas* is the real hero of the story; and Perkins had cast himself for that interesting character, and was treading the boards grandly in it, before I was properly conscious of what was transpiring. I was known to society as “Perkins's friend.” Detached from Perkins, I seemed to possess no particular identity. I was a “lean-to;” remove Perkins, and I fell. I was nothing, nobody, but for Perkins; and when he was invited, as he often was, to evening-parties, a hope was constantly expressed that he would *bring his friend*. I was an appendage merely—a portion of his presentment, like his shirt-collar; I was served up with him,—not from necessity, but custom,—like horse-radish with roast beef.

I confess that at first this situation annoyed me, and my early inclinations were in favour of flat rebellion, for the dethroning of Perkins and the setting-up of myself as monarch, in lieu of, and as successor, to him. But my better nature prevailed. I sacrificed ambition upon the altar of friendship, for Perkins was my friend. Could I pull him from his high place without hurting him? I acquiesced in my position. I tied the handkerchief over my eyes, and worked away at the saw just as Perkins bid me. My own personality was lost in that of Perkins's; I continued to be known as Perkins's friend—as the shadow, the reflex, the result of that superior man. One thing, it was a position not difficult to sustain.

It was a small part. Not much was expected from me in it, and I never attempted to make a great deal of it. I was well up in it. I knew all the cues, and said, "Ay, my good lord," "No, my good lord," whenever Prince Perkins required the utterance of those simple words. Of course he won all the applause. I can only hope that I earned some respect. I cannot be sure of it, however. We know about the first, we can hear it—it's so lusty, and noisy, and tremendous; but the last is undemonstrative, and vague, and dumb,—one may be excused for doubting about it. Sometimes, in my gloomy moments, I would wonder what would become of me in case of the death of Perkins,—an event I sincerely deprecated. Will society, I asked myself,—for there was really no one else who could give me an answer, and I was not clear that I could do so myself,—will society mourn me also as lost to it? will it wear crape, not merely for Perkins, but also for Perkins's friend? Shall I be regarded as dead, or will there some shadow of an individuality be born for me? Shall I then, so to speak, come into possession at last of that poor little personal property?

Meanwhile, I am happy to say, Perkins lived, and ate his lunch, and brushed his whiskers, and tried the patience of the public, and worked hard—"deuced"—at the Black Sealing-Wax Office; and he prospered, and the yearly "rises" of salary went on, and he became a more and more brilliant member of society,—and I was his friend; and in that capacity was often in attendance on festal occasions, standing in draughty places outside drawing-room doors, while Perkins waltzed with beauty in the centre of the apartment. I hope I enjoyed myself, but I am not very positive upon the subject; perhaps the enjoyments of the Horatios of life are at the best but tepid states of feeling. Still I was doing my duty, and should have been found quite ready with my cues whenever my good lord needed them.

"Isn't she beautiful?" he came up to me at last,—a dance completed,—dabbing his face with his cambric handkerchief.

I did not know in the least to whom he referred; still I knew my part. I admitted that she *was* beautiful. I think I added, "Very beautiful."

"She's the daughter of old Jackson of the Colonial-Soap Office."

I said, "Indeed!"

"You know him, of course?" Prince Perkins went on.

I said, "Of course." To the best of my recollection and belief, I had never heard even his name before.

But I soon afterwards perceived to whom his remarks had reference. He was dancing the "Lancers." The band—that is, the pianoforte, the cornet, and the harp—were just striking up that tune which has somehow crept into those quadrilles from the "Beggar's Opera,"—something about a man's heart being oppressed with care, and the sound of a fiddle going lightly O. I saw that Perkins, busy with his partner, was forgetful of his figures, after the manner of people dancing the "Lancers;" and I noted

his partner. Oh, *that's* Miss Jackson, is it? Little, but pretty, with dark glossy hair, and scarlet geraniums appearing here and there amongst its many folds,—profuse hair, twisted into thick hard cables and plaited into wide flat bands, and tucked in and turned out in an arrangement at once imposing and ingenious. Dark glossy eyes too, with a pleasant jewel-sparkle in them; and a full vapoury dress of white—what?—gauze—tulle—barège—net—tarlatan—muslin,—I really don't know which. Why don't they teach these things at boys' schools? She had white shoulders too, plump and satiny; but why is she always bringing them up to touch the tip of her pink ear? Is that affectation, or is she really interested in Perkins's stories—is she really laughing at Perkins's jokes? Well, I've known Perkins a good many years, and have as much right, perhaps, as any one to say that his jokes are not brilliant, and are hard to laugh at—though I have laughed at them, I admit, the hollow, joyless laugh well known on the stage, and which is part of the character I play in society. Miss Jackson is well dressed, I see now, as Perkins whirls her round; and they resume their places. The scarlet geraniums in her hair are carried off, as the painters call it, by other geraniums trimming the skirts of her filmy white — dress. She seems to me to like Perkins rather than not, and they go down-stairs together to supper; they separate on the stairs, however; she needs scope for her skirts, and she laughs prettily at the follies of fashion's dictates, as women always do, never dreaming of disobedience, however; and they consume together various mysteries from the pastrycook's and champagne which effervesces violently,—all, it seems, that is required of champagne at suppers; and they both sow the seeds of a fine harvest of dyspepsia, to be reaped on the morrow. Subsequently he handed Miss Jackson to her carriage, and had the satisfaction of knowing for certain, if he had ever entertained any doubts on the subject, that her feet were neatly moulded—is not moulded the correct term to use on such an occasion?

"Horatio," said Perkins to me, as, having taken our mantles out of pawn, as it were, giving our tickets and the necessary fee to the coachman, and receiving them in return from a pile in the back parlour, we quitted the hospitable mansion, and felt the pavement strike very cold through our thin-soled boots,—“Horatio,” with earnest accents, “I'm in love.”

“Indeed, my lord!”

“And I would marry, Horatio.”

“Marry, my good lord? Is't possible?”

These were not our precise words, but they convey the substance of our remarks.

“Suppose we light our cigars.”

So Prince Perkins fell in love. Is it treason to hint that he became rather a bore in consequence? I hope and believe that I am a good listener. I know I can bear the same story told and retold a good many times without flinching. The tale of grouse in the gun-room is always

humorous to me, and I trust I may be able to laugh at it quite to the end of the chapter. But Perkins and his love! He was prosy about it. He was tiresome to a degree. His old confident manner deserted him. He seemed to lose faith in himself. He no longer waved his baton with that severe precision that was grand to see. Perkins was disqualifying rapidly for the post he had assumed of first-fiddle and top-sawyer.

Still he fell gradually, and his manner of following up his suit in the first instance was quite worthy of his best days. He set about "working oracles," as he called it, to visit the same houses as Miss Jackson visited. In a wonderful way he procured invitations for himself from people who must have been entire strangers to him. He was always waltzing with Miss Jackson. The brightly-polished bald head of old Mr. Jackson was always close to the folding-doors nodding to the music, while he smiled approval of the waltzers. He had been many years in the Colonial-Soap Office. He had the highest respect for government institutions. He loved the Civil Service with his whole heart. I believe he desired nothing better than that his daughter should seek a husband among the officers of that service. I believe that he was willing and anxious at any moment to join the hands of Perkins and his child, and bless their union, and give them besides a very nice stock of furniture, plate, linen, china, glass, &c., and perhaps a snug little settlement in addition. And the lady received the lover's advances kindly. She had always smiles for him, and bright eyes, and waltzes, and had been heard to confess that he was "a dear,"—whatever that may be,—and moreover "very nice-looking." I am sure her "yes" was quite prepared for him whenever he had need of it. It seemed to me that the course of Prince Perkins's love was as smoothly laid out for him as a garden-lawn.

Yet he would worry himself about it cruelly. Worse than that, he would worry me. How he went over and over again the subject! How he teased and twaddled! For hours he would pin me down to listen to long incoherent ramblings about his feelings, and the state of his mind, and his heart, and his head, and the depth and breadth of his passion for Miss Jackson; what were his thoughts, his dreams, his forebodings, his ambitions; how he could not eat, could not drink, could not sleep—thought he was going into a decline—was sure he should not survive the rejection of his suit, he who loved her with that—that devotion, and all that sort of thing, you know, old fellow, &c. He came and sat up all night, enjoying a monologue on the matter, and went away a jaded-looking wretch to his morning duties at the Black Sealing-Wax Department; and after office-hours he would join me again, and renew the subject. He was dreadfully depressed and desponding, took miserable views of every thing, said that life was now a blank to him, that he had nothing to live for now, that he was a changed man, and that his heart was dead within him. I don't think he knew himself what he meant, and I'm sure I did not. It was quite in vain I attempted to console him. Fruitless were all my endeavours to convince him that Miss Jackson recipre-

cated his attachment, and that her father was acquiescent. I was deceived, he said. I knew nothing about it. How should I? What was it to me? How could it be expected that I should know as much about it as he did, who looked upon the whole thing with a lover's eyes, he who loved with that, &c. &c., and he was off again on the same cue, with the same outburst.

Upon the question of her beauty we arrived at a satisfactory settlement. Of course it was indispensable that Prince Perkins should marry none but a lady of superior personal attractions. So we went into committee upon Miss Jackson's looks, and by *seriatim* votes in her favour on the colour of her eyes and hair, on her complexion, her figure, her features, decided that she was quite pretty enough to be any body's wife, even Prince Perkins's. Then evidence was tendered as to her accomplishments. She danced delightfully, as we both knew. She could sing—(I had heard her, and I know that she looked kindly at Perkins when she gave us that favourite ballad of "Ever of thee," &c.); her voice was pretty, if not powerful. She knew French and Italian, and could it be complained of in our dear countrywoman that her accent in speaking those tongues was decidedly English? She could play Thalberg's *fantasias* on the pianoforte (skipping one or two difficult pages), and could produce neat copies of Prout in water-colours. Really, I don't see that any thing more could be required of a wife.

The fitness of Miss Jackson for promotion to the rank of Mrs. Perkins being decided upon, the three great questions that now occurred to the lover were: 1st. Did she love him as he ought to be loved? 2dly. Would old Mr. Jackson give his consent? And 3dly. Could he, Perkins, afford to marry? Perhaps the plan of the questions was not strictly logical; but then, who, pray, expects logic from a lover? Such was the syllabus of Perkins's perpetual discourses,—and very gloomy, and shambling, and vacillating, and inane he grew over his subject. I have no desire to be as prolix and tedious as he was, and therefore shall not go deeply into these. But he would insist that his path was beset with difficulties. He would have it that a loud "No!" was the answer he received to each of his three questions; and from the manner in which he spoke of his pecuniary circumstances, every one would have imagined that my poor friend was in the very last stage of insolvency. He drew up a schedule of his assets and his liabilities, quite as though he were going through the court in the course of a day or two. He informed me of the amount of his debts,—how much he owed his tailor, and his bootmaker, and his haberdasher,—regretted poignantly the money he had flung away in cigars, and renounced the vice of smoking thenceforward and for ever, that is, until a few months after his marriage. He promised to put himself upon a pecuniary regimen of a strict economy for the future. He sought my advice upon all sorts of questions. He consulted with me upon his official situation, and the existing probabilities of his ultimately arriving at that pitch of Civil-Service prosperity, the chief secretaryship of the

Black Sealing-Wax Department. We held an inquest upon his income, and as to what he could afford to do with it; and I entered into calculations concerning twenty pounds "rises" as though I had been an actuary. We endeavoured to get a glimpse of his position ten years ahead. We entered upon a partition of his resources,—so much for house-rent, so much the butcher, the baker, the washerwoman, for assessed taxes, and so on; and he was always thumping his chest, and marvelling whether his life was insurable. Yet still he doubted and held off, asking my advice incessantly, and not following it when he had got it; and still waltzing with Miss Jackson, and still smiled upon by old Mr. Jackson—in love and hesitating, and not proposing marriage.

It was evident that he was unfitted for the post he had assumed. He was becoming quite incompetent to perform the duties of first-violin; his beat was too uncertain; he was always losing his place, and taking counsel of the man below him. I began to find that I could play Horatio to Prince Perkins no longer. He was by degrees dropping out of the chief character into a secondary rank. Society began to adopt the notion that I had really an individuality of my own, apart from being "Perkins's friend." I commenced to assert myself. I would be *fidus Achates* no more. I would be *pater Æneas*, or some one of an equal distinction. I wearied of Perkins's prosings and doubtings and weaknesses. I determined to bring things to a crisis. I rebelled. Horatio turned against Hamlet.

"Perkins," I said loudly, "you're a humbug. You don't love Selina Jackson, and I don't believe she loves you. I don't think Père Jackson will ever give his consent, and I know you can't afford to marry."

He staggered back. At first I was a little afraid, for I thought he was going to strike me. But he stopped short, fumbled with his whiskers, turned pale, and left the room.

For a few days I saw him not, and heard nothing of him. Suddenly I met him in the street.

"Congratulate me," he said, and his face was radiant with smiles and blushes. "It's all right. She loves me. Old Jackson's a trump. It's fixed for the 23d of May. St. Mary Abbots', Kensington. You must be groomsman, old boy. Selina's a darling," &c. &c.

So Prince Perkins was married. Need I say that he played the first fiddle no longer? Has it not been stated already that Selina Jackson was an accomplished musician; and is not the wife always the head of the household?

For myself—shall I confess it?—I am still playing the Rosencrantz line of parts, still waiting for an opportunity to come down close to the footlights, and receive the welcome of the pit. I beat Perkins. But I have not yet been cast for leading characters, either top-sawyers or first-fiddles.

A Haunted Life.

It is a relief inexpressible that the man is dead. As I looked upon his face and saw the fierce, terrified expression which even in the repose of death still lingered about the half-closed eyes and rigid blue lips, and though in that presence I could have no hope that his spirit had found rest, I gave thanks that his life on earth was ended. What was there in this man more than in others that the punishment of his crime should be so much heavier than that of other sinners, that it should be taken out of the hand of man, and inflicted by whom, or what, I cannot tell?

It is three years since I first made the acquaintance of John Temple. We met in travelling. I was a stranger in a strange land, and his perfect knowledge of the route made me gratefully accept his offer of assistance and companionship. He was many years older than I, possessed of a great deal of general information, and able to converse pleasingly and intelligently upon any topic that presented itself during our journey. While willing to speak on any subject of general interest, he was extremely reserved about himself; and though before long I had told him most of my personal and family history, he made no return of confidence. From his conversation I gathered that he had either lived abroad or travelled very extensively; and this was literally all that I learned of him besides his name. We parted in London, after travelling together for nearly a week; and when I gave him my address and urged his visiting me, he accepted the invitation, but did not return the compliment. It was during his first visit that I witnessed for the first time the inexplicable phenomena of one of his attacks of illness.

I was then, as now, a bachelor, and had lodgings in the Albany, and, the evening proving violently stormy, I had little difficulty in persuading Temple to remain at my rooms all night. I offered him my bed, but he preferred the couch by the fire, saying he would throw himself down upon it when weary, without the trouble of undressing. This arrangement made, I locked the outer door (my rooms opened one within the other), and, lighting fresh cigars, we seemed to take a new lease of the evening.

The tempest still howled outside; and, as a gust fiercer than any before shook the window-frame, I turned to congratulate my friend on being under shelter, instead of being exposed to the storm on his way home. When I had last observed him he was lazily reclining on the couch in a posture between sitting and lying; now as I looked he sprang suddenly to his feet and stood gazing intently at the opposite wall, while there gathered in his face a fierce expression of terror such as I had never before seen. Instinctively I rose and looked at the wall, but saw nothing in its blank expanse to account for Temple's intensity of gaze. Next moment he advanced two or three steps across the room, and threw him-

self into an attitude of defence, as though warding off a blow. With his left arm raised to the level of his eyes, he appeared to strike something with the clenched fist of his right hand. I say, to "strike something;" for though I could see nothing in the space before him, the blow was certainly not given in the air, but stopped short with tremendous force, as though met by some opposing object.

I was too much appalled to speak, and stood blindly staring at my friend, who began to breathe heavily. I could have imagined from the way in which he reeled backward that from time to time he received violent blows, and still the fight continued; for that it was a fight, a deadly struggle, I soon became convinced, though I could only see one of the combatants. Before long it was very plain that Temple had the worst of it: his blows were feebler, his breathing more oppressed, and his face became livid as death. Wrought up to the intensest pitch of excitement and agitation, I felt spell-bound; unable to move, though I believed my friend was dying. A moment, and he went down as I have seen a man go down before a heavy blow on the head; and as he fell he broke the silence, hitherto undisturbed except by his laboured breathing, by a yell of what seemed to me mortal terror rather than pain.

I sprang to him, and, finding him insensible, dragged him upon the couch, and tried to revive him. But the swoon was an obstinate one; and a sudden fear that he was dead sent me out into the stormy night for medical help. Physicians abound in that neighbourhood, and I was fortunate in speedily obtaining one with whom I was slightly acquainted.

Merely telling him that a friend who was spending the night at my rooms had been attacked by fainting, and that, my efforts to recover him having proved unavailing, I had sought his assistance, I hurried with him to my lodgings.

Temple lay on the couch as I had left him, pale and insensible. Dr. Simpson felt his pulse, and I thought looked puzzled. "Bring a pillow, Mr. Johnson," he said, "and raise his head."

I did as he requested. I could have sworn that the man was dead; and I will confess that my pulse quickened as the thought of an inquest crossed my mind, and how impossible it would be for me to explain the extraordinary scene that I had witnessed: I was roused from my thoughts by the physician's voice, sharp and quick:

"This is not mere fainting. He has had a blow upon the head. You should have told me of this at once: the wound may be dangerous."

The wound! And I saw upon the pillow dark crimson stains of blood. I was petrified; for I was certain that in his fall his head had not struck against any thing likely to produce such a wound as the one I now saw. It was nearly two inches in length, and of a rough, jagged appearance.

Dr. Simpson went on sharply, as he busied himself with preparations

for dressing the wound, "How long has he been in this state, and what has done this?"

I answered desperately, "Upon my soul I do not know. He seemed to me, when this fainting attacked him, to fall on the floor without striking against any thing."

"Impossible! Did he strike the fender? I tell you, Mr. Johnson, that this is not fainting at all, but a dangerous state of insensibility brought on by this blow on the head."

I stood by the fire, lost in confusing thought. I was sure that this wound was caused by the blow which had prostrated him at the close of that ghastly fight; but I had not seen the blow given, though I had seen it received; and I felt that to mention it would only make me appear like a madman, and complicate an affair already sufficiently puzzling, especially as Dr. Simpson seemed satisfied that the wound had been produced by striking against the sharp iron-work of the fender in his fall. I was roused again by the sharp voice:

"There, Mr. Johnson, that will do. I never saw such a wound from such a cause. Now I'll give him five minutes, and if my remedies produce no effect in that time, then I must bleed him,"—and he took his lancets from his pocket, selected one, and laid it on the table;—"You say he fainted and fell?"

"Yes," I answered doggedly. I was in no mood for conversation about it.

He seemed to observe my unwillingness to speak, and, turning towards the couch, said, as though speaking to himself,

"I should rather anticipate an attack of brain-fever after this; in which case, Mr. Johnson," and he raised his voice, "he must stay here: you must not think of moving him."

It was an intense relief to me when, before the expiration of the given time, Temple moaned and moved slightly. "Thank God!" I said; and I thanked Him more heartily still when in a short time he opened his eyes and uttered my name in a weak voice.

In the course of another hour we had laid him in my bed, and Dr. Simpson had left us, promising another call about noon of the day which had already dawned. There were no symptoms of fever about the patient; he was exceedingly exhausted. I sat by his bed-side till about seven o'clock; and then, leaving him comfortably sleeping, I threw myself into a large chair in the adjoining room. I meant to think the whole thing calmly over; but I was fatigued, and sleep overcame me.

He was at my rooms for nearly a week. The wound healed rapidly, and his strength returned much sooner than I had expected. On the sixth day after his strange attack, he told me to get him a cab, and he would go home. I made no attempt to prevent it; for in truth I was glad for him to go. My nerves had received a shock that terrible night, and while constantly in his presence I felt that they could not recover their tone. He left me about three o'clock in the afternoon, giving me

his address, and requesting, rather than inviting, me to come to see him the following day. I would willingly have declined doing so, but he would take no denial, and I was obliged to promise that I would come.

I could not tell why, but I certainly dreaded my visit, and would gladly have accepted the slightest pretext for breaking the engagement, had one presented itself. About sunset I left my lodgings to walk to Brompton, where Temple lived. It was a bleak February day, and the quick walk in the keen wind did much towards restoring me to myself; so that by the time I knocked at Temple's door I had quite lost the vague feeling of uneasiness which during the day had disturbed me whenever I had thought of the evening.

I was shown into a large, bright, cheerful apartment, whose furniture and arrangements showed plainly wealth and taste combined in luxury and elegance.

Though Temple looked ill, I avoided making any inquiries about his health; and as we sat opposite to each other for some time in silence, my uneasy feelings returned in full force.

The hours passed slowly, Temple seeming lost in reverie. At length, rousing himself with evident effort,

"I am a dull dog to-night," he said. "Open that cabinet if you care for stones and shells."

"But I don't," I answered somewhat rudely.

He smiled.

"That's candid: look at the books; or stay,"—and he took from a large portfolio that stood against the wall a number of photographs, chiefly architectural, and perfectly beautiful of their kind.

In my own rooms, and at my leisure, I should have enjoyed few things more than the turning over of such a collection; but now I felt disinclined for it. My listlessness betrayed itself in my manner of examination, and I was glad when Temple perceived it, and gathering them up replaced them in their case.

I took up a book that lay on the table near me, and had scarcely opened it when Temple held out his hand for it. I gave it to him, and rapidly turning over the leaves, he read two lines with fierce bitter emphasis:

"There may be heaven, there must be hell,
Meanwhile there is our life here; well!"

He threw the book upon the table, and began to pace up and down the room, speaking slowly, "That man understood the whole thing when he wrote those lines; the possibility of heaven for some, the certainty of hell for many; and meanwhile, pending something worse or better, the endurance of this life for us all. I know nothing finer than those two lines; I should like them to be put upon my grave-stone."

"In Heaven's name, why?" I asked, startled more by his manner than his words.

"A queer kind of epitaph, I suppose you think," he continued smil-

ing; "but I shall not die like a Christian, and so have no right to expect Christian burial, with the decency of a grave-stone, and the ornament of an epitaph."

He sat down again opposite to me, and my vague feeling of fear grew stronger every moment as I looked at him. I felt an irresistible impulse to question him.

"Why not?" I said.

He leaned forward towards me till I could feel his breath in my face, and said in a low clear tone,

"Because my life is haunted, and my death will be damned."

The words were terrible enough; but they derived additional horror from the manner of their utterance. He did not speak them recklessly, but with the calmest, deepest, most mournful appreciation of their awful signification; as though he had thought the matter over dispassionately, and decided once and for ever that there was no remedy, no escape, no hope.

Temple threw himself back in his chair for a moment, and then rising began again slowly to pace the floor. He spoke at length:

"I will tell you a story, Johnson, the strangest surely that ever passed human lips. It will be almost as new to me as to you; for though I have been living it for more than four years, I have never heard it put into words, and but for what occurred to me at your rooms a week ago I should not do so now.

"I am forty-five years old. Of the forty I shall say little, though they were important and eventful years enough; and it is to them, and to their work, that I owe the comfort and affluence of my present position. At forty a man's life should be very much decided, and I thought mine was. Owing to certain successful speculations, my fortune had become so considerable that I had no need for any further anxiety about it. I had travelled over the greater part of the globe, and concluded that England was, after all, the best place to live in of any in the world. I believed that I was destined for a bachelor, and prided myself on being true to the tender memory of a buried love; though I think now that the truth was, the grief of my young life had long given place to the indifference of my riper years, and the real reason of my celibacy was not the clinging memory of my early love, but that I feared if I married I should be obliged to give up the unsettled habits of many wandering years. Accordingly, I took a house in London; furnished it after my own somewhat peculiar taste, and was preparing to enjoy the remainder of my life in uneventful ease, when intelligence reached me of something wrong in connection with a Mexican mine in which I was concerned, and in which a large share of my fortune was invested. It was with a feeling of considerable annoyance that I prepared for the journey, as I judged the matter to require personal investigation; and from the time I reached Mexico I bade adieu to the life of other men, and from that date to the present hour have led a life that I think no demon in hell would be willing to accept in exchange for his own proper torment.

"There was nothing really wrong with the mine : a panic had seized the shareholders, but I found that it had nearly subsided by the time that I reached Mexico. There was no necessity for my remaining there above a few days, for my agent was in all respects trustworthy ; but *quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*, and I made arrangements for spending the winter in the city. I have moralised a thousand times upon the small pivot on which man's destiny turns. If I could have gone mad, I should have done so, in trying to understand how, from such small premises, can be drawn conclusions so gigantic. I stayed in Mexico that winter ; and the result is, a ruined life here, and hell hereafter.

"It was a particularly gay season, and at one of the public entertainments, of which there were many, I met with one at sight of whom my heart throbbed with the fiery pulses of twenty years. I, a man of forty, who prided himself on his insensibility to the charms of women, fell a victim, like a boy, to the fascinations of a beautiful Spaniard, little more than half my age. But though I was fascinated like a boy, by the brilliancy of her flashing eyes and the glowing ruby of her lips, I loved her with a man's devotion ; curses on her, for a false heart and for a lying tongue ! I told my love ; in words which I had never thought to use, I vowed my life to her service. Bewildered by passion, I asked only leave to love, to bask in her presence day after day ; I did not think it possible that she should return my love. But she told me, her hot Spanish blood burning in her beautiful cheeks, my native language broken into music in her sweet speech, how, since I loved her, the skies were bluer, the earth greener, the flowers lovelier ; and I was beguiled by her false woman's tongue, and gave myself up even more fully to the infatuation. I thought I stood at the gate of heaven, and found too late that I had demanded admittance at the door of perdition ; I listened for the music of the spheres, and heard the roaring of infernal fires ; I thought to bathe in light, and leapt desperately into scorching flames.

"Had I been less reserved by nature, and made acquaintance with those whom I met from time to time, I might have learned the truth ; as it was, I took the lie she gave me. She said she was the daughter of a man well known in the city, though of suspicious reputation,—one Alonzo Guandano. Though I had been so short a time in Mexico, I knew his name well, as an alchemist, an astrologer, a man versed in strange and unearthly knowledge ; one to whom, by virtue of a compact with the evil one, no power was denied.

"I asked my beautiful Inez of the truth of this ; she wept, she trembled ; alas, it was all true, and she had felt his power. I pressed my love to my bosom, and swore to take her with me across the sea, to a happy home which I had already prepared. She hesitated, asked for time, and I gave it her, as I would have done my heart's blood. It was agreed that the new year should witness our flight.

"Two or three weeks passed in a kind of delirium. I saw Inez daily,

and lost no opportunity of urging our flight. She yielded at length to my persuasions, and I blessed her for it, when I should rather have cursed her. I swear to Heaven that I believed her when she said she was Guandano's daughter; and I did not discover till too late that my love was as sinful as it was passionate.

"I had made every arrangement, and the evening came which was to be followed by the morning of our flight. We met at our trysting-place for the last time, and I soothed the fluttered spirit of my timid love, and pictured to her our life that was to be in England. I told her, too, in glowing words, of what my pride would be in her as my wife; and she listened, and had not the mercy to destroy me by telling the truth at that last moment. Her exquisite face seemed to tremble in the moonshine; in the soft light her beauty assumed a character of unearthly fragility, and I clasped her closer in my arms, as though I feared she would have melted from my grasp. She uttered a faint cry, and struggled in my embrace. I loosed my hold, and saw an awful figure standing by my side. Though I had never seen Guandano, I knew at once that it was he; long flowing robes, curiously embroidered in fantastic figures and characters, enveloped a form taller and more majestic, it seemed to me, than that of mortal man.

"Bold in my integrity of purpose, I did not quail before his terrible eyes. But it was upon Inez that the terror of his glance fell. I could not intercept it; and, in a voice calm through excess of fury, he addressed her as one abandoned in character and shameless in conduct. I spoke for my love. I was not afraid to own my love boldly, regardless that his countenance gathered blackness at each word. I said that his daughter was pure as the angels in heaven. A mocking laugh answered me, and before its echoes had died away, words of doom pealed in my ears:

" 'She is my wife.'

"Did the moon fall from the heavens, and the earth spin beneath my feet, or was it that my brain reeled under the blow of his words? I cannot tell.

"I turned to Inez, not to reproach her, but to see her face once more: in its rigid whiteness I read the confession of her guilt. I spoke three words tenderly, 'God forgive her;' and as I spoke, Guandano drew his dagger swiftly from his girdle, and sheathed it in her false heart.

" 'She knew her fate,' he said: 'unfaithfulness, and death for her punishment. When I took her as my wife five years ago, I made that condition. I have kept it to-day. And there is also death for you, though not with this dagger.'

"He drew the weapon from its ghastly sheath, and breathing upon it threw it up high into the air. Instinctively I looked up after it, and saw it change into an evil-looking black bird, which flew screaming towards the north. Up to this moment I had not remembered Guandano's reputed powers: during this fearful interview I had regarded him only as the father of Inez, until I was obliged to recognise in him her husband

and her murderer, and had not once thought of him as a magician. But in this sight I recognised the evil power I had heard attributed to him; and thinking that the only chance I had for life lay in surprising and disabling him, I threw myself upon him, and tried to grasp his throat. It was as I had hoped; completely off his guard, he had no time for spells and incantations, and though he was considerably taller than I, yet my personal strength greatly exceeded his. The moment my hand was on his throat there woke in me a deadly thirst for his life: I had attacked him in the first place to preserve my own life, but now every thought vanished in a consuming desire for his death.

"It was a fearful struggle, and blow after blow was given on either side with frenzied strength. I felt myself failing, and summoning all my powers, dealt Guandano a blow which sent him reeling backwards to the earth. This would have gained me very little more than a momentary respite, but that in falling he struck his head violently against a large stone lying near, and was wounded and partially stunned. I drew from my pocket a large knife which I always carried with me on my travels, and, mad for his blood, plunged it into his breast. My intention was to stab him to the heart; but the blade snapt, and the wound, though mortal, was not instantly fatal. He opened his eyes and told me he was dying, for my knife had pierced his breast precisely where there was a mark, the sign and seal of the compact with the evil one to which I have referred.

"Half-raising himself by a convulsive effort, in a voice growing fainter and weaker every moment, he cursed me in strange words, calling upon strange powers for the fulfilment of his curse. I could understand very little of what he said; the words 'haunted in his life' were all that were distinctly intelligible. Then covering his face with a portion of his flowing robes, he lay down to die.

"It was a fearful scene. Inez lay on the ground to my left, with her face, still beautiful, turned up to the quiet stars; her attitude was one of childlike repose, lying peacefully as though in sleep. To my right lay Guandano's majestic figure, covered from head to heel in the fantastically embroidered robes, whose silver and golden threads glittered in the moonlight as they moved with the strong heaving of his wounded breast.

"The moon sank and the stars paled in the light of coming day; but it was not till the sun rose blood-red that I thought of flight. Guandano's convulsive breathing had died into silence long ago: I had been alone with the beautiful dead and the awful dead for hours. Suddenly I realised what my position would be if found under these circumstances, and the thought drove me to action.

"Every arrangement had been made for my leaving Mexico that morning, and nothing remained for me to do but to take the broken pieces of my knife to prevent detection, and to sail for England. I drew a ring from the finger of Inez, which I intended to keep in memory of her, and then raised Guandano's robe to take the broken knife-blade from the wound. It was gone: I could find it nowhere, though I was certain

it had been lodged in his breast. To my unutterable horror I saw that the expression in Guandano's eye when he had cursed me, and which I had shudderingly noted at the time, was in it still: the curse came fearfully to mind, and hastily covering the face I fled. I looked back once in my flight, and saw the face uncovered; it may have been by the wind; but with a terror that the murdered man was watching me, I fled faster and still faster, not venturing to look behind me again.

"My escape was quite easy. The vessel which was in waiting to convey me and my beautiful bride to our happy home took me alone,—a murderer bearing a curse more fearful than that of Cain.

"Nor was it long before the mysterious curse took a shape, and I knew that mine was a haunted life. One day, a month after my return to England, I was standing by the fire in a room of one of the club-houses in Pall Mall. There were about a dozen men in the room beside myself; some dining, some smoking and reading, some conversing; and I watched their movements as I saw them reflected in the mirror before me. It was evening, and the room was brilliantly lighted by many lamps: the reflection in the mirror reminded me of a scene in a play. As I looked I saw suddenly, high up in the glass, the reflection of a large round lamp, which I did not remember to have seen before. I turned to look into the room for it, but seeing nothing like it, turned again to the mirror. And now to my terror I saw that it was no lamp but a moon; and the ceiling of the room was changed for a deep blue midnight sky, and the dining-tables and card-tables, and all the familiar objects of the room vanished slowly, and in their place came trees and grass, a spot I knew too well,—our tryst when Inez and I were lovers. Presently the whole scene was visible; and there was enacted before my bewildered eyes the tragedy of my last night in Mexico. The most terrible thing was the image of myself fighting desperately with Guandano, the features distorted with mad rage. I tried to turn my glance aside, but it was impossible; I was constrained to watch the ghastly fight to its tragical ending. Just as it had really been, after Guandano had received the fatal blow, he rose and cursed me; and now I heard the words distinctly. My horror was insupportable, and I fainted.

"For about three months after that time I had no return of the curse, and I began to hope the single visitation would be all; but I was mistaken. I went one evening to the theatre: I was in my seat early, before the rising of the curtain, and was looking idly round the house, when my eye was caught by a glimmer that caused me to look straight before me for the light. Upon the dark expanse of the curtain, as though reflected upon it from a magic-lantern, was the spectral moon which I had before seen in the mirror. I knew what was coming, and watched the whole scene gleam slowly out—trees, grass, and two figures, for this time Inez and I were alone, as we had been in the early part of that tragical evening. And then Guandano's majestic form—but I need not describe it: the same vision appeared on the curtain that had appalled me in the mirror,

but this time I heard the sound of blows, and of the heavy breathing of the combatants. As Guandano fell pierced by my knife, a mortal pang shot through my breast, and, as before, I fainted.

"I could never calculate time or place: the vision was presented to me in the street, in church, alone in my own room: sometimes for months I was altogether free from it, and again I saw it twice in one week. I ceased to attend all places of public resort, and gave myself up entirely to my curse; I felt that to attempt to evade it was useless, and I even came to take a morbid interest in watching the development of its phenomena. It was never exactly as I had seen it before: sometimes there was an awful silence, save when the words of the curse were spoken; and at others I heard every sound, from my first love-whisper to the trembling Inez, to the sound of my escaping footsteps as I ran from the murdered man.

"I grew curious to know what would be the next change, but was quite unprepared for what occurred about two years after my return to England.

"On the second anniversary of that fatal day I not only saw the scene more vividly than ever, like a picture on the wall of my study, but I actually *felt* the blows which I saw given to my wraith in the vision. You think me mad, but I tell you there were bruises on my body proving beyond all question that I had been severely beaten.

"You will now understand what seemed inexplicable in my attack at your rooms the other evening, though that time was the first that I have been wounded as well as beaten."

He turned back the sleeve on his left arm and held the limb before me; from the elbow to the wrist it was covered with many-coloured bruises. I glanced up into his face as he stood before me; it had altered considerably since he began to tell me his story, and now wore the look of a man prematurely aged; the features seemed moulded into wrinkles by the inexorable fingers of despair.

I rose and walked across the room, to shake off the clinging horror that oppressed me.

He spoke again in a dreary tone,

"And now, Johnson, you must make me a promise, and bind yourself by an oath to keep it."

I was startled, and must have shown that I was so, for Temple added:

"You need be under no apprehension; all I want is, that you shall promise to come to me whenever I send for you; and above all, that wherever you may be, you will come to me when I am dying, which time I cannot think far distant."

"Have you no older friend?" I asked.

He disregarded my question entirely, and continued,

"You need have no personal fear. It will be some comfort to me; and if it is terrible for you to witness, what must I suffer?"

I was ashamed of my cowardice, and gave the promise he asked, confirming it by a solemn oath which he dictated. He seemed satisfied; and, lighting another cigar, he handed the box to me and sat down again.

I was singularly ill at ease, and bitterly regretted,—now that regret was unavailing,—my oath and promise. Temple spoke presently, returning as by fascination to the evil subject :

"And I lead a cursed life between the visions. I should have ended it long ago, but I dared not let my soul out into the dark to meet Guandano. The meeting is but delayed, and though I know that, I am not brave enough to bring it one moment nearer by my own act. Look there—" and he pointed to a clear ray of moonlight which came through the window and lay white upon the carpet; "I can never see that without feeling how lost and hopeless my life is."

"For God's sake, Temple," I broke in, "stop! I am nearly bewildered by the horrors I have heard to-night, and will not hear another word. I must keep my word, having pledged it; but I wish to Heaven we had never met!"

I regretted my passionate words a moment after, as I looked into his mournful face; but terror had made me cruel. I took my hat, and was about to leave the room.

"I will walk with you," said Temple, rising.

"You shall not," I answered hotly. "I am nearly as mad as yourself to have listened to your cursed story."

He did not seem displeased, but said quietly,

"Good night, then. Remember your promise."

I walked home like one in a dream. Call it cowardice, if you will; but my very flesh seemed to creep on my bones as I remembered what I had heard, and recalled the promise I had made. If I could have thought Temple a madman, it would have relieved me; but his manner, so free from excitement, so full of quiet resignation, forbade my doing so: and yet the thing was monstrous. As I walked along Piccadilly,—saw its familiar objects and its nineteenth-century life,—I thought of wild stories that I had read in childhood of magicians and demons, and decided that such things were fictions. But again I recalled the scene in my rooms, and was staggered.

I began to hate Temple. Though sensible that I was doing him the bitterest injustice, and that he deserved only pity from me, I was still unable to repress the feeling which before long had grown to such a height that I felt it impossible to remain in the same country with him, and determined to leave England for a time. I had been for some years reading for the bar, and was expecting an immediate call to it. My legal knowledge therefore warranted my accepting an engagement which was offered me by an acquaintance who was prevented by illness from visiting personally some property which had become embarrassed, owing to the neglect or dishonesty of his agents. I was so eager to leave England, that it was not until I had fully determined upon the journey that I remembered I had not inquired where the business lay. With a strong feeling of shame at my unbusiness-like arrangements, I made the inquiry; but every feeling was lost in that of extreme astonishment when my friend

said it was a Mexican mine. My first impulse was to throw up the engagement at once, Mexico being inseparably associated in my mind with Temple and his hideous story,—and it was from these that I sought escape; but upon second thought it struck me that thus I might find out for myself the truth of the tragedy in which Temple had played so fatal a part. If such a man as Guandano had lived in Mexico and come to an untimely death so short a time as four years before, the memory of his death would not have died out, and I should have Temple's story corroborated or contradicted.

During the interval that necessarily elapsed between the concluding of the engagement and my departure from England, as far as possible I avoided Temple, and scrupulously abstained from any reference to my approaching journey. It was with a feeling of relief, to which I had been a stranger ever since I became Temple's unwilling confidant, that I set sail early in July. The voyage was a propitious one, and I reached my destination early in August. Having once entertained the idea of investigating the truth of what Temple had told me, I came to consider that as my real errand, and began my inquiries the very day after I landed. I found no difficulty; no sooner had I asked of Guandano's fate,—saying I had heard of him as a man versed in strange lore, from an Englishman who had visited Mexico some years before,—than the whole story was told to me: how the bodies of Guandano and his wife had been found in the grove adjoining to his house,—hers stabbed to the heart, and his without sign of any cause of death. The bodies had been buried; but the following day the grave was found to be open, and Guandano's corpse missing. This circumstance had so impressed the inhabitants of the city that nothing had been done to his house, which remained in every respect as it had been left by the magician.

I asked if it were possible to enter it; and was told by my host that nothing could be easier, as it was open; and, though many visited it daily, no one had dared to remove or displace any thing contained in the building. He added, that there was one very singular thing connected with it,—that though every other room was dimmed by the dust, which had been so long accumulating, the one which from its curious furniture and arrangements was conjectured to have been Guandano's private apartment, had the appearance of being always kept in order as though still occupied, no trace of dust or disorder ever being visible in it. Popular superstition had long ago declared that this room had been the scene of unholy rites, and that the spirit of the magician had not found rest, but nightly visited his old haunts and kept the room free from change of any kind.

Business was imperative, and for three days after my arrival I found no opportunity of putting into execution my intention of visiting the deserted house. On the fourth day, taking my host as guide, I went early in the forenoon to see for myself what truth there was in the story I had heard. After walking for a couple of miles, we wound through a small

plantation, and came suddenly upon a building of no extraordinary appearance; it was very much like other large houses in and near the city, but was much dilapidated—more, it seemed to me, than four or five years of neglect would account for. My companion pointed out to me the spot where the bodies had been found, marked beyond all question; for upon the green grass were two seared and withered places, bearing sufficient resemblance to the human form to show very plainly where they had lain.

We entered the house, and passed at once into the weird chamber. I observed it curiously; the walls were painted; on a black ground, and as though leaping out upon us, were large yellow dragons, fiery tongued. One side was covered with shelves containing books, and bottles of what I supposed to be chemicals. Every thing was in perfect order; but the whole had a cold, cruel look; there was no beautiful thing in all that large room, save one picture,—the painted head of a most lovely woman. I had no need to question my host; he told me at once that it was a portrait of Guandano's wife. I was fascinated by the power of its beauty; my pulse beat quickly, throbbing to my brain, as I looked into the luminous depths of those unfathomable eyes, false lights that had lured my unhappy friend to destruction. But as I gazed, the character of the face seemed to change; a mournful, pleading look seemed bent upon me from the solemn eyes; a tender, wistful expression stole round the curved corners of the exquisite lips. My heart beat like a drum in my ears, as I thought I heard a sweet, low voice speaking in extenuation of the cruel deception.

"I was so weary; life here with Guandano was so dreary to my wasting youth, it was killing me; and I loved Temple truly, though I was false in what I said."

With a desperate effort I tore myself from the picture, and we left the room.

"I should like to have that head," I said at length to my host.

"Holy Virgin!" he replied, in a terrified tone, and crossing himself devoutly; "you must be mad to dream of such a thing."

Ascending a flight of stairs, we entered a room dimmed and tarnished with dust, and showing signs of disorder, as though it had been hastily left by its occupant; there were a thousand evidences that this had been a woman's room. On a table in the centre stood a large frame, containing a piece of embroidery, while by its side lay faded silks, and threads of tarnished silver and yellow gold. I associated it instantly with the curiously embroidered robes worn by Guandano on the fatal night, and looked carefully into it. It was a thin fabric, of a most brilliant blue, and in the finished portion were gorgeous leaves and flowers; and tiny humming-birds, bright as life, peeped out from among the leaves, or seemed, in the delicate perfection of their creation, to fly across the surface of the cloth. A vase of crystal, cased in golden filigree, stood upon a small table; from the little heap of dust upon its foot, I conjectured

that it had held flowers. Stringed instruments of unusual form lay on one side, and thrown carelessly upon a kind of divan was something which I imagined to be a black lace mantilla; knowing the story as I did, there was something unutterably pathetic in these tokens, and declaring myself satisfied, I proposed our return to the city, being fully determined to visit the house again, alone, at my earliest opportunity.

The business which I had undertaken was of a most complicated nature, and would, I soon discovered, keep me in Mexico for at least a year; I was satisfied that it should be so, and leaving the hotel, established myself in a lodging just outside the city.

Though much occupied by business, it was rarely that a week passed without my finding time to visit Guandano's house, though, after the first few visits, I resolutely avoided more than a passing glance at the painted head in the magician's room. So surely as I gazed earnestly upon it, the pleading look stole over the face, and a sweet madness took possession of my brain, such as no living woman had ever caused me. I forgot then that I looked upon a picture, and longed to press my lips to hers, to kiss away the tender wistful expression that I could have wept to see. Is it possible that the power of the master of the chamber lingered in it still, and that I came under its influence at such times?

The year had more than expired, and still I was unable to finish my business and to return to England. I had made acquaintance with several young men of the city, and through them had been introduced to their families, so that I was by no means lonely, and was not displeased at the prospect of a longer stay in the pleasant city.

One night in the winter, some half-dozen of us were returning from a ball, somewhat exhilarated by the scene we had just quitted, and possibly excited by the wine which we had drunk, when one of our party proposed that we should pay a visit to the magician's house. The proposition was instantly agreed to by all but myself; and though I objected, I was weak enough to be over-persuaded, and we entered the grove leading to the house. It was a brilliant moonlight night, and the scene was almost as visible as at mid-day. I remembered Temple's story, and felt as one in a dream. I was roused by the voice of one of my companions:

"Come on; let us see who will first dare to kiss the portrait in Guandano's room."

All laughed but myself; I was terrified.

"Do nothing of the kind," I said; "let us go back."

"Go back!" was echoed scornfully; "Johnson, you are a coward. The old knave took such jealous care of his wife while she was living that one never could touch her hand even; and now, by all the demons, I will kiss her lips."

"Bravo! bravo!" applauded his companions, and we continued our walk; I was filled with a nameless horror, and yet was so fascinated that I could not leave the reckless group.

They burst open the door, and dashed noisily into the weird cham-

ber; but not even the boldest of them dared advance another step, for a strange sight met their eyes.

The room was filled with light, which yet did not seem to come from the moon; for its pale rays streaming in through the windows were lost in the blaze. No lamp was visible; but the fireplace was filled with flames burning silently though intensely upwards. Standing near, and examining by its light the contents of a small phial, was a majestic figure, which I knew in a moment to be Guandano. Sitting, or rather reclining in a low chair on the opposite side of the fireplace, was the figure of Inez, radiant in unearthly beauty. I glanced instinctively at the portrait on the wall. Merciful Heaven! the frame was empty! For one mad moment I saw the yellow dragons, fiery-tongued, racing on the painted wall, and I fainted.

My friends took me home, I suppose, for I found myself next morning in my own room; I tried to think the whole thing a ghastly dream, and had almost succeeded in doing so when one of my companions of the preceding evening called upon me. The moment our eyes met, I was sure it was no dream, and spoke accordingly.

"What happened last night after I fainted?"

"Oh, the devil! Johnson, ask nothing about it: I think hell was let loose last night; I shall never go there again."

"Nor I," I said; "I shall leave for England as soon as possible."

I was determined upon this, and wound up my affairs speedily; I wrote to my friend that, though the business was not entirely settled, circumstances had occurred which obliged me to leave Mexico at once, and that I should see him very soon after he had received my letter, when I might be able to explain more fully what had transpired.

I lost no time in making arrangements for my return, and three weeks after that terrible night I was on my way to England.

It was a dreary voyage home, and yet I was in no haste to reach England. I tried to reason myself out of my fears; I thought over and over again how unlikely the whole story of Temple's haunted life was, and resolved that it was impossible that he should receive actual blows from what he himself called a vision. But no sooner had I done this than I remembered his attack in my rooms; he had been struck then beyond all question; and when I recalled the midnight scene in Guandano's room, reason was of no avail, and I returned to implicit and most miserable belief in all that he had told me. So I was obliged to content myself by cursing the day on which I met him, and the still more evil day when I had listened to his story: meanwhile time passed, and in due course I found myself in London.

Much as I was disinclined for it, I felt it was my duty to call upon Temple at the earliest opportunity; and accordingly one day, about a month after my return, I walked over to Brompton.

The door was opened in answer to my knock by Temple himself, who said,

"I felt sure it was you, Johnson; I have been expecting you."

"How so?" I asked.

"I cannot tell; for I was not certain that you were in England; but all day I have been expecting to see you."

We were in his study by this time; I looked at him carefully by the full gaslight, and was shocked to see the change in him; his hair was quite gray, and his features sunken and fixed in a stony expression; I asked if he had been ill, and he answered, "No."

It was a strange meeting between two men calling themselves friends, who had not met for nearly two years. I was unwilling to make any reference to my Mexican visit; but I wondered that Temple should seem to have the same feeling.

We spoke of things we felt little interest in—of politics, of the weather, and I felt that each moment was bringing us nearer to what I least wished to speak of. Presently came an interval of silence, and during its long moments I made a resolution that, cost what it might, I would no longer avoid Temple or any subject of conversation which he might choose to introduce; and I determined, too, that henceforth, if my society was of any consolation, he should have it at any time he might wish, and I would keep my promise faithfully and readily. I was brought to this resolution by a careful study of his face, with its sad, patient, careworn expression; it had what I can only describe as a *lonely* look, and my very soul was filled with compassion. I realised clearly the bitter injustice of his fate, the punishment so much too heavy for the transgression; and this thought threw me at once back to the supernatural character and power of his victim and tormentor.

I rose and held out my hand to him; he gave his as though instinctively, and with a look of some surprise.

"Temple," I said, "I now renew the promise I made in this room two years ago. I made it then reluctantly, and though I intended to keep it, I should have done so in a very half-hearted fashion; now I make it willingly;" and I repeated the solemn words of the oath.

We shook hands in silence; the compact was fully made. I sat down again, and continued, still urged to speech by the expression of Temple's face:

"I confess that I left England to escape you: your confidence oppressed me till life here seemed unbearable. If I did not think you were a madman, at least I regarded you as a monomaniac; but now I am sure that every word you spoke to me was terrible truth; and if you can find help or strength in my friendship, I bid you use it unsparingly; for I give it to you freely."

There was evidence of intense and painful emotion in Temple's countenance—emotion which for a time prevented his speaking. He found words at length.

"Thank God, Johnson, and thank you. Since you have given me your sympathy and friendship, I no longer utterly despair; I shall not

go out of the world wholly desolate ; and who knows if this may not be given to me as an emblem of the rest and comfort which I may find in another ?”

“God grant it !” I said solemnly ; and the words were a prayer.

I no longer dreaded to speak of my Mexican visit, and told him all that I could remember of Guandano’s house. When I began to tell of the picture and its fascination, he stopped me abruptly.

“Not that, Johnson. I know that tender pleading look so well.” He pressed his hands against his eyes, as though striving to shut out some agonising sight. “My curse grows heavier, Johnson ; and I sometimes think it is because, spite of all my knowledge of her unworthiness and my suffering, I love her still. ‘Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.’ Perhaps Guandano is jealous still,” he added with a bitter laugh : “the dead man jealous of his dead wife !”

I went on to tell him of the midnight scene, and it affected him in a way I was not prepared for.

“Poor love !” he said, “does he bring her there for one sad hour ?—Then indeed I am avenged.” He seemed moved with pity.

I felt this to be wrong, and said so. “Do you forget ?” I asked.

“Oh, I forget nothing. But I see you are uneasy at the turn our conversation has taken ; we will change it. I do not wish to make unnecessary demands upon your goodness. I promise in my turn not to distress you needlessly.”

He kept his word ; sending for me rarely, but always, I found, after one of his strange attacks, which now were not only more violent, but more frequent.

The year passed ; and I agreed to spend the night of the 31st of December with Temple ; we were to watch the new year in together.

I found my friend looking very weak and ill.

“I have had a terrible attack this week, Johnson,” he said ; “and I am afraid of another to-night. I feel certain that this coming year will be my last ; indeed, I do not think I shall live to see many days of it.”

“Pooh, Temple, you are nervous,” I said, as I tried to rally him upon his low spirits. But I failed to do so ; and in his solemn presence my own spirits lost their lightness, and I was not able to do or say any cheerful thing. I wished the night over as the hours dragged slowly on, and listened anxiously for the tolling of twelve o’clock, which should announce the death of the old year, and which I had determined should be the signal for my departure.

The deep-toned church clock boomed twelve through the quiet air, interrupted by the quick silvery sound of the small chimney time-piece, which, beginning to strike at three of the large clock, had rapidly beaten out its twelve strokes, and become silent long before the last echoes of the deep tone had died away. I rose with alacrity.

“A happy new year to you, Temple ; and good night.”

He rose, as I thought, to return my greeting, and to accompany me to the door; but I looked into his face, and saw—— How shall I describe it? It was the same scene that I had witnessed in my own rooms, but intensified. I was appalled, but this time not stupefied. I rang the bell, called for the housekeeper, and despatched a messenger for Dr. Simpson, who had attended Temple at intervals ever since the evening when I had first called him in.

During the time that necessarily elapsed before he could arrive, I was in an agony; nearly maddened by the feeling of impotence that oppressed me as I saw the frantic struggling of my tortured friend, the joyful chiming of the new year's bells added much to my distraction. I implored him to try to escape; I opened wide the door, and urged him to fly; but he took no heed.

As I heard the sound of rapidly-approaching wheels, I flew to the door, and opened it to the physician. No explanation was needed; and we hastened to Temple's room, accompanied by a strange man whom Dr. Simpson had brought with him. In an instant they had seized Temple, who struggled desperately in their grasp. I saw that my help was necessary, and gave it. Ultimately we succeeded in carrying him to his bedroom, and laying him exhausted upon his bed.

It is of no use. I have thought it over, and tried in vain to find words in which to describe the ever-varying phenomena of his illness. Any thing I might write would seem too mad for belief, and nothing I could say would do justice to the desperate terror and its fearful manifestations which for two days and two nights convulsed my unhappy friend. The physician and I remained with him night and day, doing all that lay in our power to calm the frenzy that was destroying him. On the morning of the third day Dr. Simpson yielded to my entreaties, and bled him from the arm till syncope ensued.

Dr. Simpson anticipated that after his recovery from this swoon, Temple would be too much exhausted to rally, and would gradually and quietly sink away; but to our horror, with the first sign of restoration, the violent symptoms returned, aggravated tenfold by the extreme weakness of the tortured patient.

The third day passed, a day of greater anguish even than the two preceding, and as night came on Temple's frenzy increased to raging madness.

"God help me! I must take the consequences!" said Dr. Simpson, and again he bled Temple in the arm. Two minutes after the operation, and though he had scarcely lost any blood, he threw his head back with a peculiar jerking motion, and was dead. I raised his head to lay it upon the pillow, and in so doing I displaced the bedclothes. Something fell to the floor with a ringing, metallic sound: I looked to see what caused it, and took up a small piece of a knife-blade, about an inch and a half in length. Temple had once shown me the broken knife with which he had stabbed Guandano, and I recognised this as the missing portion of the

blade. How it came there I had no means of knowing, but its presence seemed to confirm Temple's hideous story, if confirmation had been needed. I struggled for a moment with a feeling which I believed to be the sickness of death, and was conscious of nothing more till I found myself some hours later on the couch in my own room, Dr. Simpson standing by my side.

It was not for some days that I made any inquiry as to Temple's burial, and it was a great relief when the physician told me that he had made every necessary arrangement. I do not know, nor do I wish to know, where he is buried.

After Long Years.

As the hart panteth for the water-brooks,—
 As the scared otter looks
 Toward his wet covert when the dogs are near,—
 So do I thirst and strive, in hope or fear,
 To be with thee.

As the red kine stand huddled on the lea,
 Lowing until they see
 Who comes their swollen udders to relieve,
 So my full heart stands waiting to receive
 A touch from thee.

As o'er her weanèd child the mother yearns,—
 As the wreck'd sailor turns
 His face to land and wishes for the day,—
 So do I long and yearn to flee away,
 And rest with thee.

As the lone voices on Sophia, borne
 Over the Golden Horn,
 Cry to the Moslem of a risen moon,
 So, when thou comest, all my life's a-tune
 With news of thee.

Ah, *when* thou comest ! the old stranded years
 Look fresh and bright through tears,
 And I am wild to welcome thee : yet why ?
 Thou knowest always that I live or die
 Only for thee.

For thou hast that high instinct which I prize ;
 Thy clear unfathom'd eyes
 Absorb my gazing soul, and with sweet skill
 Show all myself to me ; yea, better still,
 Show it to thee.

So, life is good, but death should be my will
 If thou didst choose to kill :
 Thy spirit would follow if I went before,
 For I am thine—my God for evermore
 Gave me to thee.

TEMPLE BAR.

JULY 1861.

The Seven Sons of Mammon.

A STORY.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

CHAPTER XIX.

DOWN AMONG THE BAD MEN.

“ONLY to die! It is not, after all, so difficult. Only to die. Have I not heard, over and over again, the man in *Hamlet* slowly mousing out the poet’s magnificent reflections on the easiness of death? Yes; who would bear all this wretchedness and misery when the quietus offers itself at once in the shape of a bare bodkin? The Romans used to throw themselves on their swords. Could I throw myself on this half-blunted vilely-forged cutlass? Psha! I might as well attempt to cut my throat with a pedlar’s razor. It is bad enough to have one’s neck half sawn through with a leathern stock, without hacking and hewing at it with this rusty ploughshare. Ah! if I had but one of my Sowar’s swords far away—the keen glittering blade in its wooden scabbard, the sword that, like Saladin’s, would divide a veil cast upon it, or cleave a down-cushion in twain. How many years is it since I read the *Talisman*? I remember: it was at school. Lowman, the usher, lent it me. I think I lent the poor fellow five shillings in return, for he was desperately poor, and we were always laughing at his torn elbows and great ragged collars. ‘Cocky Lowman’ we called him, from his one eye that used to look round the corner. I wonder where he is by this time. Happier than I am, Heaven help me! Dead perhaps. Only to die! Number one hundred and three went off last night, quietly and calmly as a lamb, and gently murmuring about his mother in Heaven. It was consumption. *La poitrine*, as the Chirurgeon-Major called it. His mother, ay, his mother! We found her portrait in a locket hung round his neck, when the *infirmier* came to put the *linceul* on him. I

am forgetting my own language. And yet the young ruffian was here but last night, and had committed, the commissary said, two murders. His mother:—and mine?

"I am hale and strong, and absolutely relish the abominable victuals they give us, just as I used to do in our old bivouac days. Wretched and forlorn as I am, I find myself counting the minutes to dinner, and then again to my pipe, and the *cabaret*, and the dominoes. Will it end, I wonder, in my becoming a callous ruffian like that villanous old *Le Camus*? Perhaps. I might cease then to Think.

"But only to die! If I could only die! How does a man set about blowing his brains out? There are pistols enough to be had. But could I kill the Secret as well as myself? Ah, Florence Armytage, Florence Armytage! if I had you here, I would show you that the companionship of these wretches has made me as desperate as they, and either you or I should perish, but there should be an end now and for ever to our infernal compact.

"The woman says she loves me. 'Love me in return,' she never ceases to write; 'give me but one little word of love, and riches, freedom, happiness, shall be yours.' Yes, freedom, and riches, and happiness, and a fiend for a helpmate. I cannot even bring myself to lie to her. I detest, I abhor her too much.

"I am hidden from the world, and have no country and no name. Dominique Cosson, Frère laïque of the Marist Fathers of Good Works at Hoogendracht, or François Vireloque of the Hulks, Belleriport, it is all one. To-morrow it may please her to give me a new alias, and to conceal me under some fresh disguise. What if I broke the oath she extorted from me? What if I defied her to do her worst? Ah! that worst. Father, mother, brethren, honour, position, and fame, would be all sunk in one great gulf of ruin and dishonour. Can my father have been as insane, as guilty, as would appear from those fatal papers? How did she become possessed of them? Would their production have the blasting result she predicted? I dare not hope otherwise. It must be so. The lighted match is in my hand, and one spark would set our house in a blaze.

"For how many years has that woman been the curse of my life? If, when I came home first, I had gone straight to England, I might have avoided falling into her toils. But Fate ruled that I was to tarry in Paris, to know her, and become her slave. Am I wholly guiltless either? Did I never fan the flame of her wretched love? Have I ever been false, even for a moment, even in thought, to the woman who gave me her heart, and who should now be my bride? What is she doing now? Where is she? To her I am dead—dead and buried. Has she forgotten me? Has she ever felt grief at my loss? Is it assuaged now, and is she intent on becoming another man's wife? A strange girl! I dare not doubt the love she professed for me. I admire, I esteem, I revere her; but do I love her as I should? Was there not always something austere

and frigid about her that repelled me when I would have grown fond? Her letters were as haughty as she herself was. Lovers talk nonsense. She never did. She never responded to one word of endearment; and when she subscribed herself as 'with sincere affection,' it was as though she had stated herself to be my 'obedient servant.'

"Is this to be the end of my miserable life? Are there any more scenes wanting to complete the drama of sorrow? Will despair pass from sullenness to desperation? and shall I have at last the despicable courage to kill myself? I should not be the first guardian of this pest-house who had made an end of his intolerable captivity. Did not Le Camus tell me about Briffard, my predecessor, who, months ago, hanged himself in a saw-pit? He had been a *garde-chasse*,—a game-keeper,—and had shot a poacher dead. Even the sulky and morose comrades he had here avoided and mistrusted the man upon whose hands there was blood. He had never been punished for his crime, nay, had received reward—such as it was—for an act of 'courageous devotion,' as the Procureur Impérial called it; but he was none the less a pariah and an out-cast. The poacher whom he had slain left a wife and children. The woman, his widow, used to make a journey to Belleriport every Easter and every New Year,—she had to come over a hundred miles on foot, poor woman,—and wait for Briffard at the dockyard-gates, and show him her dead husband's shirt, with the bloody rent in the breast where his slugs had entered, and solemnly curse him. Easter and New Year, New Year and Easter, she never missed. The convicts used to call the doomed man Cain. Like Cain, his punishment was greater than he could bear, and one day he hanged himself. The shop where he bought the rope is close to the *cabaret*. I pass it every day. He wanted the halter, he said, for a dog. It was for himself. The commissary never liked Briffard. He told him one day that it was only through a lucky accident that he did not wear a brand on his shoulder and irons on his ankles. The manner of his death was an excuse for denying military honours to his funeral. 'Military honours?' Yes; they go through that mockery even with a dead *garde-chiourme*. We are supposed to form part of the armed force, and to be under *les drapeaux de l'état*—the banners of the State; its upas-tree, rather.

"I have not killed a man as Briffard did; yet he could not have been wretcheder than I am. A phantom continually haunted him, it was said—the ghost of the poacher he had shot. I too am haunted, by the phantom of Myself. My own phantom! A strange one to be pursued by. I see myself rich and prosperous, and caressed. Coming home to a feast of love and happiness. Poor men were envious of me even while they flattered. Mothers intrigued and fawned, and strove to palm off their daughters upon one who was heir to so many thousands a year. Thousands a year! How long is it since I had any money? How I hunger for the paltry copper dole a day which is allotted to me for my hangman's office! Thousands a year! I have not five francs in

the world. I used to buy watches and jewellery, horses, fine clothes,—every imaginable luxury. I betted, I played at cards. I have scattered handfuls of rupees. Now I am glad enough to have sufficient pelf to buy an extra half-ounce of tobacco, a dram of absinthe, or two sous-worth of fried potatoes.

"I should be better off as a convict. The degraded brutes who shared my punishment might sympathise with, or perhaps admire me, were my crime great enough. The active principle would be at work. I should have work to do, punishment to elude by craft; an escape perhaps to plan, a term to my torture to anticipate. I have known even those condemned for life indulge in hopes of some fortuitous deliverance, through the accession of a king, through a fire, a pestilence, a revolution, a hundred other accidents. For me there is no hope. A *garde-chiourme* has no friends. We are always grumbling and disputing among ourselves, and seeking to curry favour with the commissary by denouncing one another for neglect of duty. The townspeople avoid and abhor us; not the pettiest tradesman or tavern-keeper will trust a *garde-chiourme*. The soldiers are chary of drinking or smoking with us; and the sailors of the men-of-war in port make no secret of their contempt and dislike for men whose duty it is to keep guard over galley-slaves; and every *garde-chiourme* knows that he is surrounded by hundreds of bitter foes, all chained as they are, who hate him, who curse him in their hearts, and who would take his life, if they could, as though it were a dog's.

"There, I will think no more, or I shall go mad. Mad! it would be a luxury, a relief, for one's wits to turn: I should not dwell upon the past then; I should have a new world—all wild and unreal as it might be—to dwell in. But my mind seems as unclouded as my body is strong. I am not to go mad, nor to die yet awhile. But how long is this horrible While to last?"

Now these words were neither spoken nor written, nor, all loose and fragmentary as they may seem, were they uttered even with the coherence that I have given them. They came and went, and crossed each other's path in straggling and capricious order. They rose up unbidden, and departed unawares. They were the inner speech—the thoughts that coursed through the brain of the man known as FRANÇOIS VIRELOQUE, as, in coarse and clumsy garb and awkward forage-cap, he slouched to and fro on his beat in the dockyard of Belleriport.

It was a glorious summer noon, and the sky one blaze of sunshine. Not till you had blinked and winked and rid yourself of your first bedazzlement, and shaded your eyes with your hand, could you discover that the heavens were not all Sun, but that away from the great orb there stretched a boundless arch of deep azure. There were no clouds, no mists, no fogs, nor smoke below, either of marsh or of man's making; nothing but God's sky, and in the midst of it God's Eye looking down upon the folly and wickedness and cruelty of His children. What millions,

billions, trillions of francs and centimes had there not been spent here within two centuries ! what giant buildings erected, what cunning schemes of man's ingenuity perfected, what triumphant monuments of his industry achieved ! and all for what ? One half the great work done had been for the carrying out of the great trade of Murder. Saw-pits and rope-walks, forges and block-cutting machines, powder magazines and provision stores, great piles of seasoned timber, great pyramids now of cannon-balls, now of tar-barrels, armouries and warehouses full of clothes and munitions,—what were they all for ? Not for the comfort or improvement of mankind, but for the equipment of huge war-ships, that were to deal forth fire and destruction into other war-ships, merely because they carried flags of other colours, and were manned by creatures of another race. These scores of great guns so admirably adjusted, so exquisitely mounted, which the foundries and wheelright's shop turned out with ceaseless activity, what were they for but to make murder swifter and easier ? Those stalwart men-of-war's men who rowed ashore, with spruce captains and lieutenants, all cocked-hats and gold-lace, sitting in the stern-sheets, were taught to call their profession a glorious one. What was its end ? Slaughter. Those trim surgeons, with their long surtouts and instrument cases covered with shagreen, trotting to and fro between ships and hospitals, had only learnt the merciful art of healing to cure the hideous gashes and maimings inflicted by those with whom they dined at mess and smoked cigars day after day. It was handy-dandy, give and take ; the Doctrine of Compensation, forsooth. The State paid one set of men to smash their fellow-creatures' legs and arms, and then paid another set of men to mend them, and pays them still, elsewhere than at Belleriport. It is all right and proper, no doubt ; and to call war murder, and to maintain that the massacre of human beings by broadsides or by bayonet-charges, whole crews and whole battalions at a time, is a hideous and enormous sin, and one that in the end Heaven will judge and Heaven will punish, is to be sneered at as a sentimentalist, or scouted as a visionary. There were no iron-cased frigates, no Armstrong or Dahlgreen guns ten years ago, but there were plenty of ships with plenty of guns that would kill well enough when fired off. The rudest and most uncivilised nations have from the earliest times found little difficulty in hacking and hewing their enemies. It is all right and proper, I suppose and repeat, and glory is to be glory till the end of the chapter. If I hide behind a hedge waiting for my foe, and, catching him in the nick of time, send a bullet through his head ; if I beat out his brains with a hammer, or drug his posset with strychnine,—it is murder before the law. The jury put their heads together ; the judge shakes his, and writes *sus. per coll.* against my name in the calendar ; and I belong thenceforth to the ordinary, and the sheriff, and the hangman, who, after I have been exemplarily strangled, sells my clothes to Madame Tussaud. Miscreant that I am ! hasten to get me a niche in the Chamber of Horrors between Hocker and Mrs. Manning. But if I

hide behind a hedge, and am dressed in a smart tunic and shako; if I pick off, not one, but twenty enemies, against whom I have no grudge, and never saw them probably in my life before; if I march across the open, and with drums beating and colours flying allow other people, equally strangers to me, to have a chance of blowing my brains out; if I point a cannon towards a town, and load and fire it, and send so much lead or so many jagged pieces of iron so many thousand paces to kill, for aught I know, besides my so-called "enemies" (whom I don't know from Adam), the patriarch of eighty, the new-made bride, nay, perhaps the babe that is unborn; if I dash into a river on horseback, and meeting another mounted man cleave him to the chine with a sword, or batter in his skull with the butt-end of a carbine, and having taken from him a silk rag tied to a pole, ride away rejoicing,—all this is not Murder: it is Courage, heroism, chivalry, glory; I am rewarded with titles, stars, crosses, freedoms of the City in golden boxes, diamond-hilted swords, and so much money for each limb I lose. They may hang up my portrait as a tavern-sign, and name a street, a bridge, or a boot, after me; my ultimate bourne on earth—for all that I may be laid in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey—will still be Madame Tussaud's, where, however, no extra sixpence will be paid to view my effigy. I shall herd among the heroes, and be admired with Napoleon the Great and the Emperor Alexander's gigantic drummer. Again, and for the last time, I say that all this is perfectly right and proper, that war is no doubt a necessary evil, and that it is mere mawkish puling sentimentalism to decry glory and stigmatise as murderous the heroic achievements of the battle-field. Of course; but, for my part, I must express the opinion that society has been rather hard in modern times upon Cannibals. Why should we so loathe a poor Fiji-Islander or New-Zealander for making a meal of a fallen foe? If it be justifiable to slash and maim and carve and gird and thrust and burn and stab and wrench and grind and tear the life out of a man whom we never saw before, and who has never done us any manner of harm, why should it not be equally justifiable to cook and eat our enemy after we have killed him?

Meanwhile the sun shone on the ships of war of the French Republic,—upon stately three-deckers, upon frigates armed *en flûte*, and slim corvettes, and stealthy sable war-steamers sliding in and out of port with an adder's swiftness and subtlety. The sun shone upon the tall three-deckers laid up in ordinary, with their sides painted dockyard drab, and their decks protected by awnings of blinding white; upon the boats cleaving the waters to and fro;—some barges and lighters lading or unlading powder and provisions;—some wherries, manned by the red-nightcapped convicts, a seafaring *garde-chiourme* steering; some the smart gigs and launches of the war-ships, with crews strong and well-clad enough, but on whom an English jack-tar at Portsmouth or Plymouth could not have helped looking with a kind of amused astonishment. A French man-o'-war's man is in outward appearance a compound between Mr. T. P. Cooke in *Black-eyed*

Susan and the rider of a "trick act" in a circus. He is a brave fellow without doubt, and can handle his cutlass and boarding-pike in the most approved manner; but still he gives the spectator the impression of being far more accustomed to *eau sucrée* than to salt water. He is *such* a dandy; he is *so* theatrical. His whiskers have such a boulevard cut; his shirt and jacket and straw-hat such a *bal-masqué* fashion. He is the descendant of the old French Sea-kings,—of the Jean Barts and Duguay Trouins,—who shall gainsay it? He would have cheered lustily when the *Vengeur* didn't go down with the tricolour of the Republic one and indivisible flaunting at the main; but what are we to say to a man-o'-war's man who wears a red stripe down each leg of his trousers?

As the sun shone upon Belleriport,—upon its forts and ships and soldiers and sailors and convicts,—so had it shone long before Republic and Empire, and far into the days of the Bourbon monarchy. Up yonder creek rotted one of the ancient galleys of Louis the Fourteenth's time—galleys which made their last appearance in warlike life at the battle of La Hogue—galleys which, when felons were scarce, had seen chained to their oars Turks and Arabs taken from the piratical cruisers of Tunis and Sallee, and forced into slavery, as a retaliation for the captivity of Christians among the fierce powers of Barbary. High and dry in the mud was the dismantled hull of a hundred-and-twenty-gun ship which, completely armed and equipped, the town of Belleriport had offered to Louis the Sixteenth on his wedding-day; while by her side, and sinking daily deeper into the ooze, were the crazy timbers of a little schooner that had done good service in the times of the American war; for she had taken—so old men said—Rochambeau and Lafayette across the Atlantic, and brought the printer philosopher, Benjamin Franklin, back as ambassador to the court of the most Christian king. More than this, she had once borne the flag of a famous filibuster, and every old sailor in Belleriport boasted of the days when the *Bonhomme Richard* went up the Frith of Forth with Paul Jones.

Forts! there were forts every where. Not a cask of pitch, not a coil of rope, not a heap of rusty anchors, not a crane or pair of towering sheers for lifting ships' masts, but seemed protected by a shining granite wall bristling with cannon. Not to speak of the great fortresses looming far out to sea, cutting the blue waters at all kinds of eccentric angles, and surmounted every one of them by the tricolour lazily flapping in the hot air. Not to speak of the huge outer fortifications surrounding dockyard and convict prison, with a preposterous vandyked collar of moats and earthworks. Not to speak of the hoary old chateau, built by Francis the First, which defended the entrance to the mercantile port—a tower, venerable and picturesque, which stranger artists often came to sketch, and were as often warned off, or threatened with the terrors of the Maritime Prefect by stolid sentinels, who knew nothing of the fine arts, but whose rigorous *consigne* it was to prevent any one making plans of the fortifications of Belleriport.

The town, its port, and warehouses, for it still possessed considerable

commercial importance, lay to the left of the *garde-chiourme* as he slouched on his beat. He could look down on the narrow streets, the tall white houses and green blinds, the littered quays that were odorous with tobacco and coffee, and seemed sticky with sugar. Far away in the remote distance were more white houses and green blinds, standing in the midst of orange and fig groves. But no mountain range closed up the distance. For scores of miles on every side behind Belleriport stretched the red, arid, burnt-up country of the South, treeless, houseless, and hedgeless, only relieved here and there by dusky patches of some vegetation, so dry and stunted-looking that travellers stared with amazement when they were told that these patches teemed with olives and with grapes.

Still sweltered François Vireloque, the *garde-chiourme*, in his uniform suit of coarse woollen, and thoughts came over him of the cool linen garb and shady pith-hat he used to wear in the scarcely hotter East far away; of his day-dawn rides, when the breeze came refreshingly when the sun was up; of tiffin and iced drinks and bottled beer, and Manilla cheroots; and then his thoughts went back, and reverted to English summer evenings, and deep pools among the alders, whither he and his school-mates came to bathe. What was that boy's name who came to such grief because he could not swim? What an awful moment was that when he was seized with the agonies of cramp, and was only saved from sinking by his foot clutching with convulsive energy at some tall weeds! What a lucky escape it was! He remembered the pool, the alders, the pollards, the legend of the old water-rat that was said to dwell there, that had fangs long and yellow and hooked, that darted out of his hole sometimes as the boys were undressing and made them shudder, and was said to have such a horrible appetite for the legs of children of tender years. It was a perilous pool indeed; for it was on the ground of a farmer, who continually muttered dire threats concerning trespassing, and pursued timid boys with a stock-whip until he had hunted them down, and forced them, trembling, to give their names, that he might report them to the Doctor. But he never did so report them, and contented himself with "dangling" them; and they bathed in his pool and ate his apples, but gave a wide berth to his great bull that guarded the orchard from the adjoining meadow, as the dragon guarded the Hesperides, and by a sudden rush and feint—but was it a feint?—of butting would often force the biggest and bravest boy to drop a whole capful of ruddy-cheeked pippins. Dried up for ever, O *garde-chiourme*! is that pool. The hole of the water-rat, the long-toothed vermin itself, would be welcome here, where every outlet is guarded, where every chink and cranny is stopped. That gray old rascal with his cunning eye! See! there are seven hundred rascals, old and young, and clothed in gray, toiling on the great *digue*,—the breakwater,—which lies, a giant bar of granite, glistening diamond-like, across the harbour, that mocks nature and makes a false horizon.

The orange and the myrtle groves have sweet odours, they say. They

were plentiful outside this Tartarus, but their scent never passed beyond the high stone walls. In their lieu came the sickening smell from the basin in the town where the merchant-ships lay moored; a smell that was overpowering, and almost dense enough to be felt and cut asunder.

It was noon, and a clock struck, the great clock of the yard, followed by a score of ill-conditioned horologes from the churches and public buildings in the town, and that seemed to whine and grumble while they proclaimed the hour. And then the great bell of the *bagne* began to toll. It was for no man's death. It was only for dinner.

Such a dinner! The felons came trooping from their labours, scrambling over piles of wood, clumsily clambering from boats, clanking along in their chain-gangs. The guards followed them up closely, making their canes felt if the wretches straggled or exchanged any conversation. It was François Vireloque's duty to be last; and last he slouched into the inner yard of the *bagne*,—they had to pass through half a dozen ere they reached their refectory,—and saw each heavy gate locked by the *porte-clefs* after him.

Such a dinner, and such a dining-room! It must be granted that the repast was an *al fresco* one; for between the four white walls of the prison-yard the fierce sun poured down its wrath on the creatures condemned to dine without shade. The sun made so many blazing lakes of a series of huge tubs filled with Heaven knows what sickening bell-broth of herbs and hot water; only I know that large marigolds floated on the surface, and that here and there a bone with a scrap of gristle attached to it bobbed up and down, and that the whole distilled a rank and acrid perfume. Each convict as he entered the yard took a tin pannikin from a rack, and a lump of black bread from a basket, over which a *garde-chiourme* kept guard. Then if he belonged to mess number one, he went to tub number one, and if to mess number two, to the corresponding tub, and there fell to like a wild-beast. I say like a wild-beast—or rather like some caged hyæna that yells and crunches over his shin-bone of horse-flesh. The creatures crowded round the tubs, and fought and cursed for places. The weakest went to the wall; the timid criminal had his lump of bread wrenched from him by the stronger hands of the athletic scoundrel. Some positively bit at one another, or shuffled their chained legs against them to gall their sides. They baled canfuls of abomination from the seething slough that was called soup; they splashed and scalded one another, now in horse-play, now in spite; they screamed over a chance piece of flesh, and battled for it till their callous hands were slippery; they licked the precious drops of grease that had fallen on their sleeves; and when from time to time some fiercer contest than ordinary over a meaty bone converted the scramble into a fray, the guards swooped down upon them, and beat them off with their *badines*.

"Pretty animals, *n'est-ce pas, mon gars?*" was the observation of le Sieur le Camus to his comrade Vireloque. "You would not see a more charming sight in the Jardin des Plantes at feeding time."

"They are not like human beings," his companion said.

"*Ma foi !* they are like just what they are. A *forçat* is a *forçat*. In this place, my friend, one grows only to care for the *stricte nécessaire*, and their soup and bread is all in all to them. After all, shall we not relish our *gamelle* of haricoes when *ces messieurs* have dined? My stomach says yes unmistakably. See, the repast is at an end. The lambs are going to drink."

About eight minutes had been allowed for this tub-diet, and every one of them was by this time empty. The convicts were called off by the tap of a drum, and came crowding, with the same pannikins from which they had swallowed their soup, to a species of stone bar, between which and some upright casks stood several *gardes-chiourme*, who had donned blue aprons over their uniforms. Here wine was served out to each felon—wine mingled with thrice its body of water, wine thick and muddy, of a vile livid colour, a viler smell, and vilest, most loathsome, most abhorrent taste of all, but still the residue, in some form or another, of some monstrous degeneration and perversion of the fermented juice of the grape. The wretches drank this hideous mixture as greedily as they had gnawed their bread and gulped their soup; then they were marched out again, clattering and clanking from yard to yard, into the open. About twenty minutes were allowed them—for "recreation"—that is, they were permitted to stand still, without working, in the sun, or find what sheltering shade they could from pent-house roofs or behind logs of timber. And then they were driven to their toil again. A detachment was left behind in the prison, not to sweep up the fragments,—for not a scrap remained of the wolfish feed,—but to scrub the pannikins and sluice out the tubs with water. At six o'clock they would have their evening meal; no more soup, but another lump of bread, and another ration of the mixture of ink and cask-lees which was dignified with the name of wine.

"And now," said Le Camus, "it is time, I think, brother of mine, that we went to our own little *ordinaire*. I smell the haricoes at a distance. The fare of those brutes is coarse enough; and yet, putting on one side a morsel of beef, we dine scarcely better than they do. Better, we often dine worse; for a poor fellow of a *garde-chiourme* has often nothing but his pay to depend upon, and that will only get him his pipe and his *goutte* beyond his rations, whereas those among *ces messieurs* who have money may feed as sumptuously as though they were at the Trois Frères Provençaux, instead of here *en Provence*."

"Feed sumptuously!" repeated François Vireloque. "Of what use can money be to them, strictly guarded and narrowly watched as they are?"

"O scarcely fledged and thoroughly unsophisticated *garde-chiourme*!" Lie Camus said, with a sneer, "were you born yesterday, that you do not know that money is of use every where? Shut me up in a rock, and keep me there for three centuries, like a toad, but put a *billet de banque* beside me; lay me in my grave, but put a sackful of five-franc

pieces beside me,—and I will find out a way to turn them to good account.”

“But what is the use of money to a convict chained to another, who at any moment may betray him?”

“The rich are not betrayed; it is only when one grows poor that treachery steps in to sup us up. Did you observe, among those brawling gangs howling and squabbling over the buckets, certain groups that kept close together that were very still and quiet, and that seemed by no means anxious to dip their pannikins into the soup?”

“I did. What then?”

“Well, to every one of those groups were scouts and outlying pickets, who were fed by lumps of bread, pinches of tobacco, or a *gros sous* or two, to give warning of the coming of some sharp-eyed *garde-chiourme* among us. In every one of those groups there was feasting going on. I tell you, we have these among our convicts who dine every day on white bread, on cold roast fowl, and Lyons sausage; who have ripe figs and peaches, and rich *fromage de Brie*, the rascals; and wash all down with choice burgundy or genial cognac.”

“Whence do they procure these luxuries?”

“How should I know,” the elder gaoler answered, shrugging his shoulders. “They have money, that is enough. Perhaps the sailors from the ships, perhaps the free shipwrights or labourers in the dockyard, bring them these little delicacies. We *gardes-chiourme* are too closely watched to carry provisions for them, or to take bribes. Is it not so? The sergeant has his eye on us; the commissary has his eye on us; and then not one of us can make sure but that his comrade may be a spy. All I know is, that not a day passes but some convict is placed *au cachot* for being in possession of tobacco; that scarcely a week elapses without another getting the bastinado for being drunk. When we discover them, they are punished of course; when they are not discovered, they eat and smoke and drink and enjoy themselves much more than we do. But they must have the five-franc pieces, my brother. Woe be to the convict who has no money.”

“Will money help them to escape?”

“Chut! you are venturing upon forbidden ground. *On ne parle pas d'évasion du bagne de Belleriport*. Your English friend tried to escape only last week, you remember, and was retaken in scaling the very last of the walls. A nice dose of the *corde goudronnée* he would have had, but that an imbecile of a sentinel shot him through the back, and sent him to the hospital. I don't think he will ever come out of it.”

“Is he worse?”

“Much worse this morning; but bah! Why waste words upon *cette canaille*. Hark! there is our bell. It is time for us to go and eat our haricoes.”

CHAPTER XX.

SISTER MARIE DES DOULEURS.

THE sun was tired out with excess of wrath, and in a red rage had set, and gone to sleep. The slavish toil of the *bagne* was over, and the convicts lay by hundreds, in their dormitories, on the bare boards of shelving barrack-pallets. They were still chained. A slight uprising of the boards made their pillow; there was a scanty coverlet for each four men, and that was all. So they lay until one side was sore and bruised, and then turned over, until the other was as bruised and as sore. Mattresses could not be had even for money at Belleriport, though cushions and soft pads had been detected in being smuggled in sometimes for villains of wealth. At either end of these vast dormitories, ventilated by iron louver casements, like those in the cooling room of a brewhouse, burnt with dim light a lamp of oil. Up and down the long lane between the rows of barrack-beds walked all night, but relieved at intervals, with drawn cutlass and pistols in his belt, a *garde-chiourme*. The convicts were either supposed to sleep soundly enough after the toils of the day not to have their dreams disturbed by the tramping of the watchman, or else authority in its wisdom did not care a centime whether their slumbers were broken or not. But for all the lanterns and the watchfulness of the guardians of the night, dark deeds were whispered, plots for escape hatched, dire schemes of revenge planned and matured. The seemingly chance clink of a fetter, as its wearer turned on his couch of distress, veiled a watchword. A tug at a coverlet became a signal. Men spoke in snoring, and shrouded secret intelligence in the incoherent babble of feigned sleep. Freemasons, there is a *camaraderie*, a Rosicrucian code among convicts, defying the acutest surveillance, the most lynx-eyed supervision, which we wot not of. So when the sun was down François Vireloque repaired to his usual cabaret outside the gates,—he was not on guard that evening,—and smoked his usual pipe, and drank his usual tumbler of wine. Drams of spirit were the ordinary stimulants with which the *gardes-chiourme* regaled themselves: but they took no inconvenient notice of their comrade's abstinence. He was a sulky fellow, and had not come there for nothing; that was all they said. The disparagement mattered little; they were all well-nigh as sulky as he; and each man had doubtless as good reasons as Vireloque for being what he was.

This evening there was a *fête* at the cabaret. It was the festival of St. Somebody,—perhaps of St. Nicholas, patron of thieves,—but at any rate the mean little wine-shop of the *Etoile qui file en goguettes*. Very simple decorations sufficed to give it a festal appearance. There was some coloured calico about. There were some tallow candles stuck in sconces. There were some flowers in tin jugs, and an image of the saint in plaster of Paris. Double prices were charged for every thing. The landlady had a new cap, and the landlord was drunk. Individually,

these things were not, perhaps, out of the common way. In the aggregate they made a capital *fête*. There were ladies to add to the enjoyment of the evening—ladies who danced, ladies who sang, ladies who, if the truth must be told, drank and smoked as vigorously as the male guests, and, when the festivities reached their apogee, mounted the tables, and bellowed in convivial ecstasy. It was difficult to say to what class of the community these ladies belonged. They were perfectly virtuous. There was not the slightest stain upon their reputation. They were not *lorettes*, *grisettes*, *dames de la halle*, or *fleuristes*. They were mostly of robust and athletic build, did not occasionally disdain a pea-jacket as an outer garment, knew well how to use their fists, and, better still, their tongues. It would not perhaps be libellous to hint that they were in some way connected with fish, and with the docks, and with carrying burdens, and generally with the commercial prosperity of Belleriport.

With these ladies the *gardes-chiourme* danced in an ungainly and bear-like manner. Them too they treated to *cassis* and other cheap refreshments. With them they joined in ranting choruses, always ending with a "Tra! la! la!" or a "youp! youp! youp!" Every thing was very merry indeed; and the landlord, after proposing the health of *Messieurs les gardes-chiourme* in a few delirious words, sank exhausted by festivity into the midst of a wreck of broken bottles and battered tin jugs. The gaolers in the prison within could hear the sounds of the gay carols floating on the night air, and growled bitter complaints of their unlucky lot in not being able to join the *fête*.

François Vireloque sat aloof and smoked his pipe, as was his wont, thinking perhaps of some nautch he may have seen in the far East. When one of the Bayadères of Belleriport twitted him upon his moodiness, he offered her refreshment, but declined to dance; and at last they forbore to tease him. The clock-hand pointed to nine, when he heard his name pronounced beside him.

He turned and saw a little imp named Crapaudin, a shock-headed urchin, who was the orphan of a *garde-chiourme mort sur le champ du devoir*,—in other words, slain by a convict with whom he was struggling in the endeavour of the latter to escape,—and who was growing up the *protégé* and adopted child of the Devil's regiment. He blacked the commissary's boots; ran errands for Madame; fetched and carried to and fro; and looked forward to becoming one day a *garde-chiourme*, provided always that his incorrigible propensities for lying and thieving did not insure him, at some time or another, gratuitous board and lodging for a term of years within the *chiourme* itself as a convict. "*Il a une figure de cour d'assises*," said the commissary of Crapaudin, meaning that he possessed what we might term a Central-Criminal-Court countenance.

"*Garde-chiourme*," said this engaging youth to Vireloque, "you are wanted instantly inside."

"Wanted! by whom?" exclaimed François, rising. The blood rushed to his heart. The poor captive thought, perhaps, that his deliverance was at hand.

"Wanted by Sister Marie des Douleurs. A rendezvous, oh! Nuns are fond of making appointments with fine young fellows such as you are. *Car tu es bel homme, garde-chiourme.*"

"Silence, you little reptile!" cried François, "or I'll wring your neck. How dare you talk in that manner of the good sisters?"

"Oh yes, I dare say. Good in the light. Bad in the light. I don't like nuns. *La n'est pas gai, les sœurs grises.* At all events, she wants you immediately; and if you don't go, she'll be sure to report you to the commissary."

"Where is the good sister, jackanapes?"

"Jackanapes yourself. She is in the *parloir* of the infirmary. She is with the almoner. Perhaps they have been drinking hot wine together. *Ah, que c'est bon, le vin chaud!* Say, *M. le garde-chiourme*, will you treat me to a glass of mulled *ordinaire* before you go?"

"I will treat you to a sound cuff over the ears, you young monkey," replied the moody man as he paid his reckoning. "Stay, here are three sous. Spend them in drink, or in tobacco, or in gaming, or in any thing else you choose. Whatever it is, it will do you some harm, I am sure. I go to obey the sister's order." And so, buckling on his cutlass, he left the place.

"Three sous!" cried Crapaudin, fingering the coins which had been flung to him. "That isn't much; but it will buy something to wash out one's windpipe with, won't it, Mother Cayenne-pepper?" The landlady of the *Etoile qui file* was, from the fiery nature of her temper, generally known among her guests by the nickname of "*La Mère Poirer rouge.*"

"*A-t-on jamais vu pareille vermine?*" she exclaimed, pinching the boy's ear, but not by any means indignantly. "What will you have that will make you ill, *pendard?*" she continued. "We are *en fête*, and you shall be treated." Crapaudin was a favourite at the *cabaret*, and was indulged accordingly.

Meanwhile the *garde-chiourme* strode with heavy footsteps towards the prison-gate, gave the password to the sentinel, and was admitted. He knew his way well enough about the place by this time; and, passing range after range of low barrack-buildings with penthouse roofs and heavily-grated windows, came at last to a square edifice standing alone, and looking very white and ghastly in the moonlight. The windows, which were larger than the ordinary ones, were not grated, but protected from sill to lintel by a strong close wirework.

The *parloir* was a bare whitewashed room, with no other decorations than a framed list of the rules of the infirmary and a plain wooden crucifix, and no other furniture than two long forms of unpainted deal. The first among the rules was alarming. "*Sera puni de la bastonnade,*"

it ran, "*tout forçat convaincu d'avoir feint une maladie.*" Every convict detected in "malingering," or simulating sickness, was threatened with the bastinado.

A *garde-malade*,—a convict with a white apron and canvas sleeves over his prison dress, which gave him somewhat the air of a criminal cook,—was dozing on one of the benches, starting spasmodically now and then, either at the pricks of his evil conscience, or at the hardness of his resting-place.

"Sister Marie wants me, number five hundred," said the *garde-chiourme*. "Where is she?"

"She is in the dispensary," the nurse replied. "You can go there to her. So she said. *Que Dieu lui soit bonne!*"

It was seldom that a pious aspiration was ever uttered save by the chaplain in that abode of crime and woe, yet the convict-nurse, who was otherwise a most villanous rascal to look at, seemed quite sincere as he bade Heaven bless Sister Marie. He was under a twenty years' sentence for an atrocious crime; yet it is a fact that, as he spoke, he crossed himself.

François Vireloque stepped as softly as he could to the door of an adjoining apartment on the-ground-floor, and discreetly tapped thereat. It was opened by a Sister of Charity in the long, coarse, black robe with heavy sleeves and white-flapped cap and wimple of her order. She made the man a sign to enter, and went on compounding some medicament from the bottles and gallipots before her.

The light from the oil-wick, swung in an ugly cresset from a chain, threw monstrous shadows from her robe and head-dress—shadows that eddied in black waves over the floor. Her busy hands went and came among the bottles and gallipots; otherwise her form was motionless as that of a statue.

The *garde-chiourme* had doffed his cap, and stood motionless too, but in an attitude of patient respect, waiting to be spoken too.

"What is your name, *mon brave?*" she asked, in a low sweet voice.

"François Vireloque, good sister."

"So he said when he entreated me to send for you. You speak the English language?"

"Sufficiently well. I have been in England."

"It is well. You must wait a little. The almoner is with him now in the infirmary. He is not of our creed; but the Abbé's prayers will not be thrown away. He is very penitent. We do not wish to convert him; only to soothe his dying pillow."

She said this more to herself than to the man, and said it almost in a whisper. When she had finished her task, she sat down on a form like those in the *parloir*, and took out a little book, and read by the light of the swinging cresset full ten minutes, moving her lips meanwhile as in prayer. The *garde-chiourme* stole a furtive look at her. He had heard much of her good deeds, but had never seen her before. Her hair, poor

thing, had been ruthlessly cut off according to the grim usage, her eyes were cast down, her lips closed, her whole countenance composed in deep and earnest devotion; but François Vireloque could tell at once that the Sister of Charity was young and eminently beautiful.

Of what avail were her soft lineaments and sweet quiet manner in this den? Of much. They made savage men meek and tender. They brought a spark—were it ever so slight—of the better feelings of humanity into minds seared and callous, into hearts harder than the nether millstone. They brought a sunshine into a place that was less shady than black as pitch with unutterable crimes and nameless horrors. They whispered the one divine word, Mercy, in the midst of a Babel of threats and execrations, of the groans of misery, and the shrieks of despair.

Six Sisters of Charity were permitted by the government to exercise their beneficent ministrations in the infirmary of Belleriport. Beyond its precincts, and those of the closely adjoining chapel, they never strayed. Their errand had but one purpose—consolation. Of the labours, the crimes, the punishments of that dire place, they knew nothing; they only knew that when the sick and suffering were brought to the infirmary, it was their blessed function to tend them night and day, and strive their utmost to heal them. Now it was a recaptured slave who had been badly wounded in his mad attempt at evasion, and had been brought to the hospital to die. Now it was some miserable wretch whose frame, from neck to loins, had been mangled by the tarred rope,—the infliction of which still goes under the name of the “bastinado,”—and was sent to the infirmary to lie on his face, and groan and screech till lint and unguent had done their work, and his back was healed. And now it was some puny criminal, some effeminate villain,—for crime and bodily strength go not always together,—whose constitution had broken down beneath the hideous toil of the *Grande Fatigue*, and who was glad to crawl to the pallet of the infirmary to be rid of his chains and be peaceful for a while; and find Pity at last in the arms of a Sister of Charity, and of Death, the great pardoner of human sentences.

Of the six sisters whose noiseless feet were ever on the move between the sick wards and the dispensary, four were elderly and wrinkled, two young and fair as she upon whom the *garde-chiourme* was looking. But Sister Marie des Douleurs was the youngest and the fairest, the kindest and the best.

Anon there came down the stone staircase from above the almoner—the prison chaplain, a ruddy ecclesiastic, in orthodox *soutane* and *rabat*, a worthy soul enough, who did his duty, but could not help yawning sometimes as he did it. He had been so long the ghostly director of the scum of the earth. He had heard so many lies, so many false professions of repentance. He had the more justification in yawning to-night; for was not his penitent a heretic, for whom, without recantation, the Church could do nothing?

He murmured as much to Sister Marie, and, saying that he must

have his supper, went away. Then the sister gravely beckoned to the *garde-chiourme*, and they went up-stairs together.

The patient whom they were to visit was the convict Englishman. He was dying. He lay on his back, and from that quick, heavy, ceaseless breathing, which came not from his lungs, but from his throat rather, there could be little doubt that the sands were first running down, and that his earthly career would soon be over. A convict-nurse stood by him, with a sponge dipped in some aromatic liquid, with which he occasionally bathed the temples of the moribund. An *aide-chirurgien*—for the Surgeon-in-Chief had given the case over, and had gone to play his evening game of billiards—was seated at a little table a short distance off. He too was accustomed to such scenes, and, to tell truth, was reading a novel.

The sister and the *garde* approached the bed, and the former laid her hand upon the shoulder of the dying man.

"Number five hundred and thirty," she said, in her low soft voice, "I have brought the person to you whom you so much desired to see."

The breathing came quicker and heavier, the dull eyes opened; but there was no response.

"Call him by his name, sister," the *aide-chirurgien* interposed.

"I do not know his name, M. Cantagul," Sister Marie replied.

"Nor I scarcely. Stay, what was it the Commissary called him. Ah! I have it—Hugh."

At the sound of the name the Englishman started up in bed, and gazed about him with wild eyes.

"Who wants me? who called Hugh?" he exclaimed in guttural accents.

But dreadful sight as in his pallor and his death-sweat he was, the *garde-chiourme* looked well-nigh as fearful in the lamp-light. For every line of his face was convulsed by horror and amazement, as he kept muttering,

"Hugh! Hugh! who is this man that calls himself Hugh?"

The Burg-keeper's Secret.

PART I.

THE PRICE OF THE SECRET.

It was night, and a stormy wind drove the black clouds closer and closer round the old Burg* of Erslingen.

So stormy was the wind, so black were the clouds, that Bäbele, the Burg-keeper's daughter, thought of the legend of the Erl-king, and thanked God, with her blue eyes piously cast down, that her father was not in the forest. She felt uneasy about him, however, for he had gone to the town, and had not yet returned.

"I should not like to be alone when the storm comes up," she said to herself timidly; and leaving her knitting, she went out of doors to look for him.

Crossing a little stone yard, which was encircled by a fragmentary wall nearly a yard thick, she reached the head of the dreary stone steps that divided her from the town and from every living being. As she looked down from the summit of the Burg, these steps appeared to be almost perpendicularly built, and few but mountaineers would have gazed on their dizzy depth without giddiness.

Bäbele looked down fearlessly. From her childhood she had been accustomed to go to the town night and morning for milk and water, and she only wished she could see to the bottom of the narrow stairs now, that the sight of a passer-by might cheer her solitude. She ran down a step or two, and leaning her plump arms on a loop-hole, from whence many a cannon-ball had been sent in days gone by, her eyes rested on the town below. She fell into a reverie, from which she was awoken by a sudden peal of thunder, which drove her into the house,—the quaint old house built in the old square tower of the Burg, which was the only home she had ever known. The poor child shut the door with trembling hands, and seeking her own little chamber overlooking the steep orchards, she took her kitten on her lap, and bent over it, that she might not see the flashes of lightning.

As yet no rain had fallen; but after a momeneary lull one heavy drop splashed on the window-pane, and soon Bäbele heard the angry waters rushing down as if they were avenging spirits, and the lonely Burg was their solitary victim.

For nearly an hour the storm raged. It seemed two hours to Bäbele, who was frightened by the lightning, and anxious about her father; but when the sky cleared she grew cheerful, and prepared the supper.

The church-clock struck eight before the Burg-keeper returned.

* *Burg*, stronghold or citadel.

With hardly a word of greeting, and without taking off his wet clothes, he sat down to the deal table and began to eat. His daughter was used to his moody ways; but she noticed that he was more silent than usual, and that he dashed the salt into his soup with an inconsiderate hand.

"Thou art wet, *Vaterle*," she ventured to say. "Holy Jesus, what a night! Wert thou caught in the storm?"

"Yes—no," he answered abstractedly. "What saidst thou, child?"

"Wert caught in the storm, *Vaterle*?"

"Why dost thou question me? I hate questioning. Peace!"

She finished her supper without appearing hurt at his roughness. Båbele was not heartless, neither was the Burg-keeper without affection; but you perceive that they were not polished people, and did not vex themselves with over-much ceremony in the matter of intercourse. One more remark she hazarded, apparently a misappropriate one.

"Just a year ago, this very day, Baron Karst came, father."

The Burg-keeper glared upon her with the look of an angry bull.

"Peace, I say. Is it not enough that all the devils of hell have been let loose to-night? Go to bed, girl, and sleep, if thou canst."

Poor Båbele took up her lamp with somewhat of a crestfallen air, and went to her little bedroom. In five minutes she was fast asleep.

Perhaps every one would not have slept so soundly under the circumstances. The room had a strange prison-like smell in it, and was in reality one of the cells in which occasional spies or deserters were thrown during the time of war. Two rusty iron rings still hung from the walls to which the prisoners' hands used to be chained, and Båbele's salmon-coloured petticoat and blue wimple, which now occupied them instead, fell into the shape of cowering human figures with attenuated outstretched arms. A cheerful little modern window, filled with flowers, was hidden in shadow, but two old apertures in the roof admitted a ghostly light, and between these a draught of wind made continual moaning.

Though Erslingen was quiet, the storm still raged beyond the hills, and sent whispers now and then to tell of its devastations there. These whispers called up all manner of unearthly echoes through the dreary old fortification. They howled fitfully among the trees on the hill-side, knocking their heads together with strange cracklings and blows. They blew a kind of war-trumpet from the bastion; they played hide-and-seek in the loopholes of the wall. In the cavern beneath the Burg-keeper's house they played the dreariest game of all. It was a chamber which had once been subterranean, but was now open on both sides, though both descent and entrance to it were almost choked up with mound and brier. Any one who did not object to a scratched face and to bruised hands might easily force his way through these, and would find that, after crawling a couple of yards on all-fours, the arched roof would give him room enough to stand up; perhaps his head would not touch the ceiling by six inches, and the arch was constructed at so obtuse an angle that he might take a few steps forward safely.

Standing there in the day-time, he would obtain just enough light to see that the ground beneath his feet was much frequented by lizards, and various black abominations, a matter easy to guess at from its clammy slimy feeling. The wall would appear to be of a dim grayish colour besmeared with green, and a damp miasma of unwholesome life and death would greet his nostrils.

Come out by all means, inquisitive stranger, and bring no particle of the black soil sticking to your feet.

Two or three hours passed, during which Bäbele slept as stolidly as a young heifer. All at once something in her dreams, or something palpably present to her senses, caused her to start up and look round her.

She heard a voice or voices proceeding from beneath. Were they in the little sitting-room? No; they were too muffled for that. Were they in the arched cavern? She listened attentively, and shuddered to find that they *were* there. If Bäbele had a detestation of any spot in the world,—and Erslingen was the world to her,—that spot was the cavern. When other children came up from the town to play hide and seek with her in her childhood, she would never consent to hiding in it, and once screamed herself into a fit from having been pushed in by some rough companions.

Frightened out of all her simple powers of thinking, she jumped from the bed and ran into the passage, without stopping to put any thing over her blue cotton nightgown. Her only thought was, that it must be somebody who had secreted himself there for the purpose of murdering herself or her father.

Her father's room was divided from her own by a narrow foot-bridge, built to supply the breakages of the wall, and exposed to the open air. She was too frightened, however, to feel the cold, and too frightened to scream when she had gained the Burg-keeper's chamber. She could only pass her hand over the bed with the intention of shaking him into consciousness, and call his name with terrified whispers.

What was her horror on finding that he was not there!

She felt then as if there was no safety but in some remote corner only known to herself. Her senses gathered themselves into a narrow focus in the space of a few seconds. The fear of death is a wonderful concentration of one's faculties.

Gliding like a cat, she recrossed the tiny bridge, passed by her own little room on the outer side, holding tight to the stone juttings, and finding a broad flat ledge behind the chimney, she crouched down.

No one could find her there, for no one else could feel their way in the dark as she had done; and her present most terrible fear gone, the poor child trembled, and wept noiselessly for thinking of her father.

By and by she dared to raise herself up a little. Peering over the edge of the chimney, she could just see the black arch of the cave, made blacker still by the straggling light of a lantern which issued from within. Through the rubbish heaps and confusion of bramble and nettle the light pricked distorted lines.

The whispers of the storm were hushed now. The sweet fruity air was only too clear a medium for any sound, and the voice she heard was neither low nor indistinct

"Blood-money—soul-money; keep it," the voice cried shrilly. "It burns my fingers, it sticks to me, it weighs down my soul, it eats into my heart. The money is red, I say, red with blood; let it go."

There was a chinking sound as of money suddenly dropped, a muttered curse, a half-suppressed shriek, then the pricks of light grew more vivid, and the noise of parting boughs and falling stones told her that the speaker was coming out.

A cold sweat broke over her face as she drew back hastily. She dared not think that it was her father; she dared not assure herself that it was he who had spoken; yet the voice was his. He was not in his bed; and, in spite of her former fears of murderers, she knew that the locked gate below the fortress rendered any ingress almost impossible.

What need to recount her terrors and surmises? It is enough for our purpose to say, that she imagined all kinds of improbable things, none of which brought her nearer to truth or nearer to comfort. At last, finding her blue-cotton *camisole* not the warmest apparel for a cold autumn night, especially *sub dio* on an elevated position, she crept back as she had come, and stole into bed.

"The money is red, I say, red with blood; let it go."

It would not go from her dreams. She could dream of nothing but money, and it was red money; it stuck to her fingers; it weighed her down the whole night long.

PART II.

THE SEEKING FOR IT.

THE morning was fair and breezy, as might be expected after such a storm. By five o'clock Bäbele was up and stirring; and though the event of the night, and the horrible nightmare that followed, were not things to be soon forgotten, she had too much upon her hands to be otherwise than cheerful.

For so busy a day seldom came. The business was sociable too, requiring many helpers—just the business most suitable to mirth-loving gossiping Bäbele. Before six the helpers had come, namely, two broad-shouldered ruddy-faced youths (on one of whom Bäbele looked with favourable eyes), and three red-armed light-haired maidens, very buxom and blithe, who wore their hair after the Suabian fashion in long pigtails behind, and were full of life and fun. They were soon ankle-deep in the wet grass, picking up the apples that had fallen during the night, in readiness for the great Most, or apple-wine making, which was to follow.

The south side of the Burg was one irregular hill and dale of orchard. Turn whichever way you choose, you will find yourself in some break-neck path between two deep fosses, thickly planted with the tree bearing that small ruby plum peculiar to this district; or on some inaccessible

pinnacle you have reached, and you will descend, you know not by what means, where you have just two feet of grass to stand upon and a splendid pear-tree behind, with no background to speak of; or you will dodge some old rambling wall till it brings you to a stand-still at the brink of a steep embankment studded with apple-trees; or you will follow the easy slopes which lead to the summer-house and the rows of benches where visitors sit on a Sunday, and are served by Bäbele and the Burg-keeper with bread, Swiss cheese, fruit, and wine. Here, on this sunny height, Bäbele and her fellow-workers took their breakfast of *Wasser-Suppe* and black bread, sitting on the ground like gipsies, and making the meal hilarious enough.

The tin basins were no sooner emptied than the work went on again. All the fruit was collected now, and the crushing commenced. For this purpose, the apples were placed in a narrow stone trough, over which a heavy wooden wheel was turned on a pivot by the men, the women's work being to remove the pulpy fruit, and replace it by fresh. The Burg-keeper did not join either in the work or in the talk that accompanied it, but looked on moodily. At eleven o'clock they took dinner. This meal was as frugal as the breakfast had been, and only differed in the larger amount consumed, and the addition of Bairisch beer. All at once Bäbele cried, "Look out towards the tower-bridge, father."

"Well, child, a carriage. What of that?"

"It is Baron Karst's carriage, *Vaterle*. I know it by the piebald horse."

The Burg-keeper jumped up, and shading his eyes, looked earnestly in the direction of the bridge. A look came over his face, which the merry most-makers did not see—a look as of a lightning-struck man. All soul and life seemed to flee from his face, leaving it scared and blank and ghastly.

Bäbele saw it and trembled. He turned away quickly, and walked towards the Burg.

"Didst say 'twas Baron Karst's carriage, Bäbele? Think you, he will come up here?" asked one of the youths.

"He came last year when he visited the town," answered the girl abstractedly.

"I would like to see him," continued the other. "A right noble gentleman he is. Why, they say he's like a prince in his own Schloss."

"I would rather see the pretty lady, his sister," said Bäbele's lover. "I wouldn't stir a step to see the greatest man alive, but I would walk a mile any day to see a face like hers, or—" he chucked Bäbele slyly under the chin—"like thine."

Here the Burg-keeper returned quickly.

"Bäbele, Baron Karst and, and—" his voice shook with agitation. "They are here. Look you, girl, run to the tower and meet them; they are coming up the steps. Say I am busy; they do not want me."

He took her place at the apple-trough; and the girl ran towards the

Burg, casting off her serge apron, and wiping her heated face as she went. Two handsome graceful children sprang to meet her as she reached the head of the steps. Behind them followed the Baron and his sister.

She was very lovely. Why did her loveliness send a sharp pain to the beholder's heart? Nothing could be purer or more delicately moulded than her features; nothing could be fairer than her pale pinky complexion or golden hair; nothing sweeter or gentler than the smile of her lips, or the tone of her voice. Yet at the first glance of the sad blue eyes you shuddered, for the soul of them was wanting.

"Dearest Hildegarte," said the Baron, in the fondling tones that one would use to a sick child, "this is Bäbele, the Burg-keeper's little daughter, who always gives the children apples. You remember her, do you not?" She held out a timid shrinking hand to the blushing girl.

"There are only two children, Bäbele dear," she answered, with a voice of touching sadness; "but give them some fruit, please."

When they reached the summit, she relinquished the Baron's arm.

"I may walk with Bäbele, may I not, Maurice? I like to see her shake down the apples; it used to delight Felix so."

He smiled assent, and she put her little delicately-gloved fingers upon Bäbele's plump red arm. The Baron accompanied them to the house in the Burg-tower, and then stopped, saying,

"Where is my old friend the Burg-keeper, Bäbele? Let him come to me, whilst you walk in the orchard with Lady Hildegarte and the children."

He looked so much like a king standing there, and there was so much of kingly authority in his courteous voice, that Bäbele had not the courage to deliver her message. What right had her father, or any one else, to refuse to see so noble a gentleman? With a deep curtsey she stammered out her obedience.

He might have been a king, the Baron Karst. Others than the rustic Bäbele felt abashed and mean before him. A handsome, winning, generous man, a man who would do no half-measures, give no beggarly gifts, commit no paltry sins, hurt no inferior creature without regal compensation. With men he was a Bayard, with women a very Louis Quatorze; 'twould be hard to tell who worshiped him most.

We follow Bäbele and Lady Hildegarte as they climb the mimic mountains leading to the summer-house; the children sporting before them. Every now and then Bäbele shook an apple- or plum-tree; then the poor lady laughed a sad strange laugh, and picked up some fruit. She never tasted any, but placed it carefully amid green leaves in a small basket she carried on her arm.

"Do eat an apricot, gracious lady," said Bäbele tenderly.

"No, I eat none; I carry all home for Felix; he is so fond of it."

She said this over and over again, even when walking by herself, and lifted the lid of her basket once or twice to be assured that it was quite full. Homely and untaught though Bäbele was, she had tact

enough to avoid the most-makers, knowing how painful the sight of strangers must be to Lady Hildegarde, and ran alone to call her father, leaving the lady and children below. When she returned, they sat down on a bench that looked towards the vineyards and the Suabian Alps.

"Bäbele," said the lady, looking earnestly at her, "did you know me a long time ago; before I lost something—before I was ill?"

"I saw you once when I was a very little girl, gracious lady: it must be ten years ago, for I am fifteen now."

"Ten years. Is that long? Was I just the same then as I am now? I mean, had I lost something then?"

Poor Bäbele looked perplexed. "I cannot remember, dear lady."

The children were now tumbling on the grass in the dell at their feet. Lady Hildegarde looked round timidly.

"Are you sure my brother won't hear? he must not hear, because it would vex him. Bäbele, may I tell you something?"

"Oh, dear lady, yes."

"And you are sure my brother won't hear?"

"Quite sure, gracious lady."

"But will you promise not to tell him yourself, dear Bäbele?"

Bäbele promised, with a smile at the lady's earnestness.

"I think I may trust you; but there are not many girls that I would trust, Bäbele. Do you understand me? There is hardly a girl in Botwa who would not die for Maurice. Every one loves him and fears him so. And I," she whispered this hurriedly, "and I—I don't love him."

The girl's undisturbed face seemed to reassure her.

"Is it so very wicked of me? But I cannot help it. He is kind, as kind as he can be, to me; he never speaks a harsh word; he lays by money every year for Felix; yet I cannot love him, though I try hard to do so. Perhaps if I found what I have lost I should better understand why I cannot. And I shall never find what I have lost unless some one helps me. I thought, perhaps, you could have helped me, dear Bäbele."

Bäbele expressed her perfect willingness to do any thing her gracious lady might wish. The poor blue eyes thanked her disappointedly.

"But you did not know me when I was different; I must wait till I find some one who does—who could help me to remember, I mean, dear."

She broke off from the subject when the children approached, and talked no more except of Felix and the fruit.

Baron Karst leaned on a broken parapet, and looked around him with the air of a man who had the finest sense and the keenest enjoyment of a lovely prospect. His white jewelled hands crumbled the old mortar mechanically, as if it were their habit to crumble any thing that came in the way, and whilst his fine large form reclined easily on the wall, his feet were planted on the ground with much firmness. A grand lordly man with such a *physique* as is rare to see in these days; and with immense force of character, too, not a mere handsome heavy case with no man's soul in it. He wore a copious fair beard, and his lips had a trick

of smiling when his eyes looked least inclined to join them. When his eyes smiled, no woman could withstand him. The false sunshine of his lips made him terrible to man, woman, and beast. He was looking dreamily on the pretty picture below, when the Burg-keeper's steps disturbed his reverie. Without turning his head, but pleasantly and carelessly, as if the man were not important enough to interrupt him, but were forgiven for it, he said :

"So, Moser, how goest it with thee? Art prosperous as ever? Thy cellars will overflow with wine and most this autumn. Hast any thing to say? Daughter Bäbele is old enough and pretty enough to have a sweetheart; she shall have two hundred gulden on her wedding-day; and let the best man have her."

The Burg-keeper made no answer, and the Baron did not hear, or would not heed, a gasping sound at his elbow as of a drowning man. In the same bantering tone he continued,

"Wouldst prefer to leave this eagle's nest, and be my forester somewhere not quite touching the heavens? On my soul, 'tis too breezy a place for a man of thy years. Thou shalt go down lower by a step or two, good Moser, nearer to thy friend the devil."

A dreadful cry—the more dreadful because it was half suppressed—rose to the Burg-keeper's lips. Flinging himself on his knees, he brought his white quivering face close under that of the Baron, who flinched from it, as if ugliness or affright were things too disagreeable to be borne with.

"In Christ's holy name, pity me, my master. Talk not to me of places or dowries. Only let me cast this burden off my soul and die. Give me no more money; no gulden thou hast given me but weighs me down like a dead body."

The Baron still smiled good-humouredly.

"Thou'rt a veritable old fool, Moser. Keep thy money and thy wits, man; spend it, live gloriously, get drunk, hold a jolly carouse. Marry a wife or take a mistress. Deck out thy Bäbele handsomely."

The man still remained kneeling, but his face was covered now by his trembling hands. His words came hoarse and slow from between them.

"Can my body revel when my soul is in hell? Free me from the curse my avarice brought upon me; it is greater than I can bear. Every minute of my life is hateful and black with it. My bread tastes of it; my hands are stained with it."

"This is damnable folly; have done with it," said Baron Karst shortly. "For once for all, Moser, I tell you that I have listened to that story for the last time. Beware!"

With the dogged courage of a hunted animal at bay, the Burg-keeper started up and confronted his master.

"I will be heard—I will release myself from the curse of THE SECRET."

A stream of angry fire, like the flash of a sword, shot from the Baron's eyes. He rose in quiet haste. In another moment his hands were on

the Burg-keeper's throat, and the body of Båbele's father hung over the bastion-wall. Two hundred feet below lay a sunny slope of vineyard. For a second the man swung in the air between life and silence. Then the Baron threw him as if he had been a rotten pear on the grass-grown pavement beside him, and opened his shirt-collar after the exertion.

"You might as well have gone to the devil when you were so near it Moser; but poor little Båbele might have cried, and I don't generally ill-treat those who serve me. Damn you, can't you be grateful?"

Moser wiped his brow and made no answer. Here the Lady Hildegard, with Båbele and the children, appeared in the distance.

Baron Karst bent over Moser, and clutched his shoulder with an iron hand. His whole powerful unscrupulous nature glared on the face of the secret-holder. Between his set teeth he whispered, "For the last time, remember. My patience is not twice tried."

The Burg-keeper cowered in the shadow of the wall. The Baron stepped out in the sunshine.

"Dearest," he said tenderly, passing his sister's hand through his arm, "we must go into Båbele's pretty room in the tower, and have some bread and wine. Is all this fruit for Felix? Let me carry it for you."

Lady Hildegard's eyes looked anxiously towards the half-concealed figure of the Burg-keeper.

"Is that Båbele's father; may I speak to him?" she asked.

Båbele sprang forward to call him. Baron Karst touched her arm.

"He will come by and by, love," he said to Hildegard. "He is gathering some pretty lichens for Felix. We must not call him away."

They went into Båbele's room and took wine with new milch-brod and fruit. Then they rose to return home.

Båbele accompanied them to the foot of the wooden stairs, where the carriage waited. The Baron put a gold piece in her hand at parting; but the words and the look which accompanied the gift, and not the gift itself, made her blush so rosy red and place the coin in her bosom. The Burg-keeper had not appeared, and no one missed him but the Lady Hildegard. As she held out her small thin hand to Båbele, the old troubled questioning look came to her. "Perhaps he knew me before I lost something—perhaps he could have helped me to remember," she whispered.

PART III.

THE FINDING OF IT.

Two years passed away, and the orchards were again gleaming red and purple like Aladdin's garden. But the most-making was no longer merry, as it had been in the days of Båbele; for she was gone, and the Burg-keeper's hired workers dared not so much as laugh in his hearing.

When the Burg-keeper was asked after his daughter, he always said that she was dead, and so it was. Though living in the letter, she was dead in the spirit; dead to him, dead to her old pure self, dead to the

scenes, and lovers, and companions of her youth. There had been no preparation for this blow; only once more Baron Karst had come to the Burg, and he had given her another gold piece, and whispered in her ear. The next morning she was gone. Once again, on the eve of the Herbst Ferien, a heavy storm visited Erslingen. Not Bäbele this time, but her father remained alone on the Burg, looking wistfully to the bottom of the mountain stairs, thinking with a blanched face that he would give the price of the SECRET for the sight of one human face or the sound of one human step now. He was alone. Only the tempest kept him company. Its pitchy blackness blurred even the spires and house-tops from his sight; its countless voices of shrieking wind and the howling thunder would have drowned the shouts of an army. Like an evil spirit it possessed him. "Thou shalt be all our own," it said; "thy fellow-men do not need thee. We caress thee in our arms. We speak to thee as friends who know thy former life. We recall thoughts, and words, and deeds, none others know of. We tell thy SECRET to each other." It made sport of him. Its hollow echoes made mockery of the secret from side to side, like a tossed sea; the winds now receded and now advanced; even when most distant they caught up the dreary burden. The Secret seemed a merry game to them, they would not let it go. Oh, could he but die now!

Sometimes the forked lightning revealed a dense mass of houses all closed and shut from him; sometimes it showed him the troubled steely Neckar; then he set his teeth and cursed aloud, for the river wended its way to a country made sinful to him because it was the home of Bäbele's sin.

Once it struck out a fiery path on the south side of the Burg, and he saw the apple-trees touching the ground and swaying heavily to and fro. He saw also a woman's form that glided on the verge of a deep fosse, and shuddering, he crossed himself, for he deemed that it was a spirit. Who, indeed, but a spirit would be abroad on such a night?

It was midnight before a lull came, but still the rain poured down in torrents, and ever and anon the surging of the tempest was heard afar off. The Burg-keeper did not undress, but threw himself on his settle-bed to procure the best rest that he could. Since Bäbele left him he had fallen into many such unaccountable ways; not changing his clothes or cooking any food for days together, but sleeping by odd starts, and eating a morsel of rye-bread, and an apple or onion, as the fit took him. Though barely forty, he looked an aged man. Perhaps he had slept ten minutes, when a low creeping sound in the room, and the touch of something wet and cold upon his hand, caused him to start suddenly and utter a fierce ejaculation.

The noise ceased then, but the cold wet touch remained. Jumping to his feet with a repetition of his angry inquiry, he shook it off. A plaintive cry, half like an infant's, half like a woman's, broke on his ear, followed by a sound of footsteps; in a few seconds he felt that the spirit, the voice, the presence were gone.

With trembling steps the Burg-keeper groped his way to the press on which stood his tinder-box, and struck a light. Looking round him, he saw a trail of water on the bricks as if a sodden garment had swept over them, and here and there clear indications of footmarks. He hesitated for a minute and then went out, holding his horn lantern above his head.

The gusts of wind were so sudden that it was with great difficulty he could hold it so as to let the light to fall on the path before him. Twice his hooded cloak was blown over his head, and the last time with such violence that the lantern fell from his hands. But even the terrific weather without seemed more tolerable to him than the dreadful solitude within, and he persevered on his way.

When the wind silenced, and enabled him to reach the verge of the platform on which the Burg-tower was built, he distinctly saw a human figure in advance of him. It had turned down a steep path leading to the orchard-ground, and evidently paused there to ascertain the purpose of its pursuer.

In such a state of mind as the Burg-keeper was then, he had no purpose at all. He followed the black figure merely because it was there, because he could not rest within doors, because his racked spirit found less of torment in a dread that was palpable than in his own self-contemplation. He did not forget the *thought* that always haunted him, but it haunted him less than when no other thought had been present to his mind.

He went on doggedly, the dark shape fleeing ever faster and faster before him. At last he felt that he was worsted. He stood on a narrow ridge from which the grassy bank ran down on either side, slippery as ice with the fallen and still falling rain, and he heard pattering feet grow fainter and fainter in the inaccessible fosse below. As he retraced his steps a sudden thought seized him. Had some one discovered the treasure in money that lay hidden in the cave, and secreted himself in the Burg for the purpose of robbery? At first a fierce feeling, almost of joy, filled his heart; for he felt that were the price of the secret taken away, half the sin of it would be expiated.

It was for a moment only. Hateful as the place was to him, hateful as the sight of that red money was to him, he knew that, for the sake of something more hateful still, he must go. Shielding his light under his cloak, he crept round to the cave, and kneeling behind the mounds of earth and weeds that choked up its mouth, he listened intently.

The figure had forced an entrance there before him. He heard its low fearful breathing within two yards of him.

The Burg-keeper did not doubt, then, but that the mound divided him from a thief. Perhaps it might be murder to-night between the two. Well, he had sold his soul to the SECRET, what matter if his body went too? it was the lesser part. Without speaking, with hardly a moment's consideration, he dashed into the opening of the cave and flung aside his cloak, so that the light fell full down upon the face of the intruder. A woman clad in a dark gown that was soaked with rain lay crouched on

the damp floor, her head bent forward in eager expectation, her eyes dilated with fear. She had no covering on her shoulders but the long golden hair, which hung almost to her waist in tangled masses; her fair arms were attenuated, her whole frame was fragile and wasted.

If the Burg-keeper had suddenly come face to face with a murderer, he could not have looked more ghastly. The power of speech and of movement failed him. The lantern fell from his hands and tumbled towards the Lady Hildegunde.

For it was she; worn and pallid though she was, shrunk to so mere a shadow of her former perfect loveliness, no one who had known her once could have failed to recognise her then. And the Burg-keeper had known her long years ago, before her beauty was dimmed by the loss of reason.

He fell on his knees, and chattered out some distorted words that seemed to reassure her. The terrible watchful fear passed from her eyes. She touched his arm and whispered,

"You will not let him find me—you will be kind to me, for Båbele's sake. Poor Båbele has a baby to love. Did you send Båbele away?"

The wretched father shook his head.

"Do you, too, fear my brother? Is no one in the world so strong as he is? Oh! do not tell him I am here. If he comes, you will not tell him; for Båbele's sake you will not?"

"No—no—no," muttered the Burg-keeper.

"I will tell you why I ran away," she continued. "My brother is not unkind to me; he has never spoken harshly to me, nor frowned upon me with the dreadful frown he gives other people when they offend him; but he watches me; he looks at me with eyes that read my thoughts; he knows that I do not love him, and he hates me; ever since I discovered that Båbele had a baby, he hated me. The little thing was so pretty, it let me nurse it and fondle it; it reminded me of a time when I was different, it made me want to be again as I used to be; he saw it all. The baby made me feel happy almost, and he would not let me see it again. That is why I ran away. I thought if I could find Båbele's father, he would bring her and her baby here, and you would all help me to remember—"

The Burg-keeper covered his face with his hands, and moaned aloud.

"When I touched your hand in the tower, and you spoke so fiercely, I grew frightened. But I am not frightened now. Oh! for Båbele's sake, help me to remember; you knew me before I had lost something, I feel that you did. Look at me, that I may be sure of it."

But he could not meet her eyes. He swayed to and fro, with a low bitter cry, which she seemed to take as compassion.

"Never mind," she whispered, "I shall be helped one day. Båbele's baby helped me a little; it is not all so dark as it was."

She took the lantern from the ground, and holding it up, cast her eyes with a vague curiosity round the cave. The horror of its damp isolation did not appal her; she looked on the crawling living things at her feet

with a childish inquisitiveness, and touched the mildewed wall with her hands. All at once a wild gleam shot over her face; she clutched at something that lay between two projecting stones, and held it to her bosom, shrieking with a desperate maniacal energy."

The Burg-keeper seized her arm rudely.

"For God's sake let us go from here. Lady Hildegard, come with me."

"Do you fear my brother is near? Oh, I will be very quiet; I *must* stay here," she whispered.

He would have taken her in his arms; but slight though she was, her frenzy gave her power to resist him. He saw that unless he used force he could do nothing. Only one hope was left to him—darkness; and with a violent effort he wrenched the lantern from her hand, and dashed it with such force on the wall as to put out the light.

Then he breathed more freely. He felt that the SECRET was still safe, and death in any shape would have been more welcome to him than the disclosure of it. He had no courage for that. The two, the seeker and the hider of the Secret, crept to the edge of the subterranean chamber, and both felt, though from different motives, that the only chance of safety lay in silence and darkness. For about ten minutes they remained so, each holding breath to listen to the other. At last she whispered,

"I hear nothing. Did you think my brother was coming when *you* put out the light?"

"Yes," he said; and the next moment he crossed himself, and prayed the Holy Mary to forgive his lie.

"But it is so quiet," she continued, "that I think there can be no fear. I must tell you what I have found. I have found something that has helped me to remember—"

"Silence! in the name of Heaven; you will turn me mad," he groaned.

But she was not to be silenced so.

"It can do no harm what I am going to say," she said plaintively, "if my brother is not near. I am so impatient to tell you what I have found; but I must go back a long, long time."

She pressed her hands over her brow, and remained in deep thought for several minutes. Then she began in a calm sad voice,

"You knew me many years back, Bäbele's father, when I was as young and as pretty as Bäbele. Do you know what made me so happy then? Sometimes I have thought that it was because somebody who was as tall, and as handsome, and as brave as my brother, took care of me—but no; *he* had a fierce way of looking too when angry, and I never loved him as I loved my baby."

Again the thin hands were pressed convulsively to her breast. Rocking herself to and fro, she sang or chanted a sweet low cradle-song.

"Oh! Bäbele's father, I know it all now. It was the baby that made me happy, and I have been looking for it, wanting it all this time. The handsome man with the fierce black eyes was killed in the hunt one

day, by a fall from his horse. I remember that his bleeding body was brought home to me, and how frightened and ill I was afterwards; and when I came to my senses, they told me that the child had strayed away from its nurse in the forest, and was drowned—" With a piercing cry, she started to her feet, and threw her arms above her head.

"It was not drowned,—I never believed the story. I never loved my brother, because I could not believe it; and I have been seeking, seeking for the child ever since." Then bending close to the Burg-keeper, she whispered,

"He is here, very near us. Feel what I hold in my hand; it is the little shoe that I embroidered for him with my own hand. He wore it when he last sat upon my knee. When I saw a tiny, tiny bit of blue silk sticking from between the stones, I knew at once that it was my work. Oh! shall I find him?"

The Burg-keeper made no answer, and she continued,

"I think I shall not. I think he is dead. Did my brother murder him?"

"He is dead. That is enough to know."

"No, I will know all. If my brother murdered him, I will travel over the whole world till I find some one who is strong enough, and just enough, to protect me from that bad man. You are Bäbele's father, and he has taken her from you. Will you not help me to obtain justice?"

Beneath that wild autumn sky, with the shoe of her murdered child held to her heart, with her feet resting not two yards from the spot where his body lay, she listened to the revelation of the man who had hidden the wicked deed. With every step of the dread recital her senses grew keener and keener. When he ceased to speak, her own voice was steady, and her words were clear and composed. He had not given his name; she was ignorant that she breathed the air contaminated with the breath of her brother's helper; she only knew, and it was enough for her to know, that her child had been murdered, for the sake of his heritage, by his natural protector, and that the secret had been kept by a man's soul purchased for money.

She stood up calm and stately.

"Let me have rest and food," she said. "You promise that this confession can be sworn to by the man who secreted the body. You promise to surrender him on the day that I need his attestation?"

He promised on his oath.

"I call God to witness," she added, "that if there be justice in this country, my brother shall be deprived of his unlawful heritage. My murdered child shall be avenged, and avenged by his simple mother."

Some little time ago I was staying in the family of the Herr Syndicus, or recorder, of the ancient town of Erslingen in Wirtemberg. Observing that I was curious in all matters relating to the former history of the

place, he one day gave me a bundle of yellow documents, tied up with what had formerly been green silk, but was now faded to a dirty white. "There," he said, "are the records of one of the most remarkable trials that ever happened in our country. Those writings were made by my grandfather, who was then a young man, and clerk to the Syndicus; and if you have patience to wade through his old Suabish spelling, I think you will be rewarded for your trouble."

The quaint writing, and quainter spelling, somewhat abated my first ardour; but having ample leisure, and the assistance of a more proficient friend, I deciphered the whole of that manuscript. Had it not been of an extraordinary length, I would have preferred, and I feel assured that my readers would have preferred to read the original narration of the trial of the Baron Karst for the murder of his nephew; but though the statements of the Lady Hildegarde and of Bûbele, the Burg-keeper's daughter, have no equal in simple pathos, the other part of the record might be wearisome to the general reader.

In those days, the days of the wild Duke Charles Alexander, there was no justice but the justice that brought money to the ducal coffer; and the Baron escaped with a heavy fine, while the Burg-keeper was allowed to linger a year unsentenced in the dreary fortress of Hohenasperg. At the end of that time he was condemned to death; but (so the record went) "the Baron, in gratitude to his old servant, interceded for him, and the man Moser was released." Nothing could surpass the heroism, the long-suffering patience, the energy of the Lady Hildegarde, as displayed in the narrative of her escape from her brother to the time of the trial. On foot and alone, in momentary peril of being captured by her child's murderer, she made her way to the royal residence of Ludwigsburg. Her beauty and friendless youth commended her to the heedless Duke, who had no higher or better quality than a kind of flighty good-nature; and he summoned the Baron Karst to answer the charge against him. At the court of justice she is represented as "bearing herself with an exceeding meek dignity, hardly raising her eyes from the ground excepting when addressed, and paying no heed to the many flatteries that were paid to her beauty of face and form." The document closed with these words: "After the adjudication, the Lady Hildegarde disappeared, with the poor wench Bûbele; and the two were never heard of after."

A touching end, but not, perhaps, the saddest that might have closed so sad a story.

Chalk.

A RIDE over the fine breezy downs near Brighton, or a visit to the chalk-hills north of London, is a pleasant treat to any one who can appreciate pure bracing air, and is able and willing to recognise the peculiar beauties and characteristics of English scenery. There is a soft swelling undulation about our chalk not elsewhere seen, a smooth outline of richest green, through which the white rock constantly peeps, and at intervals a wide hollow sweep of that dead creamy white which we know by experience to mark the pit where chalk is being dug, or whence it has lately been removed. Let us go into one of these pits, or, if the reader prefers, let us place ourselves in imagination in a boat under the broad arch of some of the bays at the back of the Isle of Wight, with the picturesque Needles rising like ruined columns out of the blue waves. Every where the facts are the same. A uniform mass of white soft rock, marked with lines more or less removed from the horizontal, and occasionally thin strings of black flint, indicating these lines with surprising and picturesque regularity. If we travel round the English coast, or into the interior of the country, we find this same chalk very widely ranging. We ought to be proud of it, for one of our island names, ALBION, is derived from its appearance. It forms the Shakespeare Cliff at Dover, and the cliffs at Ramsgate and Margate. Beachy Head consists of it. It shows itself at Cromer in Norfolk, and at Flamborough Head, and is seen in all its characteristic features crossing the Isle of Wight, and standing out beyond it, as we have said, in isolated pinnacles of extreme beauty. We find it in Salisbury Plain, in the north and south downs in Berkshire, and in the Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire hills. We pass through it in many of our railway cuttings. We dig into and through it for water, and we quarry it for making lime and other purposes. We write with it, we even occasionally build with it.

Let us examine it somewhat minutely. We all know its usual colour, its soft texture, and its purity when burnt for lime; most of us know that numerous shells, fragments of star-fishes, and corals, and even perfect skeletons of fishes covered with scales, are occasionally found in it. It is very picturesque, very characteristic, very useful, and contains very curious things. The shells that we find in it are of many kinds, some almost exactly like common shells of the sea-shore, some very unlike these, and evidently belonging to races extremely different. There are fishes in it, not much unlike our sea-fishes; there are bones like birds' bones, which, however, on careful examination and comparison, turn out not to have belonged to birds, but to have supported in the air flying reptiles, some of them larger than the largest albatross. There are other bones that have not yet been found in England, proving that very large reptiles of other kinds lived when the chalk was formed.

But all these are comparatively rare, whereas if we take up any fragment of chalk from any part of the mass, and make a careful examination of its particles under the microscope, our eyes are opened to a fact exceedingly remarkable, namely, that all this large mass, often several hundred feet thick, and occupying so large a part of the surface of our island, seems to be one heap of very minute shells, either whole or broken, once belonging to many varieties of a very few species of small animals, such as those now found at all depths, but chiefly abounding in the deepest profundities of the Atlantic Ocean. Powdered chalk, or chalk mixed with water, and reduced to a pulp, is also wonderfully like the mud from coral lagoons in the West Indies; but a large part of it seems absolutely identical, when examined under a powerful microscope, with what is called *oaze*—the mud brought up in a state almost tenacious and pasty from the bed of the North Atlantic Ocean. Indeed, it would seem that after this *oaze* has had time to allow its particles, long compressed by the weight of the vast column of overlying water, to attain their natural state, under the diminished pressure at the earth's surface, it is absolutely undistinguishable from powdered chalk.

Very unlike the other limestones in texture, and some of its properties, is this chalk, although it agrees almost accurately with fine marble in its chemical constitution. It is a nearly pure carbonate of lime; the particles being minute and only held together by adhesion, not cemented or crystallised in any degree whatever. This condition explains some of its peculiarities, such as its earthy texture, allowing us to use it for writing or drawing, and its extreme absorbency. In its driest state as a solid it contains a good deal of water which cannot be removed by exposure to moderate heat; but when saturated, a block measuring twelve inches every way will contain two gallons of water, very nearly one third part of its total content, and about the same proportion as that contained by soft loose wet sand.

From its actual composition and its contents, there can be no doubt that chalk was formed at the bottom of water, and in all probability tolerably deep and smooth water. It has undergone little change since, for the particles of which it is built up lie side by side, apparently as they were originally placed. Here and there are threads of crystal or calc spar, and occasionally bands of black flints, sometimes touching each other, sometimes asunder; but these are not rolled, like the flints found in the gravel, and the chalk that touches them is generally precisely similar to the rest of the deposit.

The position and form of the hard angular flints may also be accepted as proof that they were produced where they are, or at least that they have never been removed since their first formation. The evidence of this is, indeed, quite as good as that by which we judge from the position and form of the rounded pebbles of gravel-beds that they are due to the mechanical force of moving water. Gravel is a collection of rolled pebbles and sand, while the flints in chalk have never been rolled for a

single instant. We have only to look at them to be sure of this. The whole mass of chalk was probably a deposit in deepish water but little disturbed, but the flints do not seem to have been deposited in the same way that the chalk has been. They do not seem to have existed at any time as mud, and, to understand them, we must look for some other origin.

Making use once more of the microscope, we may learn something that will throw light on this inquiry. The examination of thin slices of flint reveals the same truth as that often indicated on a larger scale to the unassisted eye, namely, that these curious black stones contain within their substance sponges, or other marine bodies. Not unfrequently we find the spine of some old sea-urchin or sea-egg sticking out from an unworn and unremoved flint—occasionally a shell is there; very frequently there is a peculiar structure reminding us of the sea-anemone, and now and then are corals. Some flints are hollow in the middle, the hollow being partly filled with crystals of the same substance, the crystallised flint (silica) projecting inwards, or some small detached stone, with a rough spongy surface, being loose in the middle. Every thing seems to prove that the flints were formed by chemical agency brought about during some temporary stoppage of a deposit of chalk-mud, and while the pause admitted of a multitude of sponges and other marine forms of life being accumulated on the ocean-floor. Perhaps some eruption of hot water charged with silica may have taken place from submarine volcanoes. The number of beds of flint is very variable in different places, many being often observable in a single cliff or quarry, while elsewhere a great thickness of chalk exists without any. The flints are generally lying on the ancient floor of chalk; but occasionally they occupy cracks and fissures in the completely-formed deposit.

The way in which this curious accumulation of flint was originally produced in the mass of the chalk remains, as we have already seen, a mystery; nor is it quite manifest why the beds of flint are sometimes regular, sometimes quite irregular, and sometimes altogether broken up. Whatever the reason may be, it would seem impossible to suppose that the whole process of the deposit of chalk-mud by marine animals, and of flint hardening on sponges and soft animals, can have been completed without the lapse of a very long period of time.

But the fact that chalk is met with at such elevations as near Dover, at Beachy Head, and the Surrey Hills, is another startling fact. Originally deposited at the bottom of an ocean, the mud of former times is now a solid mass several hundred feet thick, much of it far distant from the sea. The soft chalk is widely spread at various elevations in many parts of Western Europe, and a somewhat harder kind occurs in Poland, Moldavia, and the Caucasus. Over all these countries there was sea, and perhaps deep sea, when the chalk was deposited, however they may now be in the centre of continental land. Of the land of those days we will not now speculate.

The bedding of chalk, marked very distinctly in many places, is by no

means generally horizontal, as we know it must originally have been. Certainly, a deposit of fine mud at the bottom of water can only have been produced in parallel and horizontal planes; for whatever the form and irregularity of the ocean floor, or the strength and direction of marine currents, an impalpable mud must certainly have been originally accumulated at a dead level, the mud first filling up the hollow places, and then covering every thing with a succession of thin films. But now the beds, though parallel to each other, are no longer horizontal. Generally, they are tilted up at an angle of several degrees. The chalk of the North Downs has a distinct tilt towards London, and that of the South Downs in an opposite direction; while in the Isle of Wight and the coast of Dorsetshire, not far off, the beds are either curved over in magnificent and lofty arches, as seen at Scratchells Bay, near the Needles, or are absolutely vertical, as at Culver Cliffs, on the east side of the island, between White-cliff and Sandown Bays.

The white chalk-cliffs of the south coast of England are, as it were, repeated and reflected by an almost similar series on the opposite shores of the English Channel, between Calais and Havre; and there cannot be a doubt that the mineral deposit is continuous, and that the separation of England from the Continent by the waters of the Channel does not separate the chalk, which is only covered over and concealed, and not entirely eaten through. But chalk, though seen in abundance on the French coast, soon passes into a harder limestone in the interior of France, losing its peculiar texture towards the south, beyond the valley of the Seine. The actual composition of chalk, and of the limestones that it passes into, remains nearly the same; and there would seem to be little change in the shells and other remains of animals with which it abounds, although the mineral peculiarities of the rock are quite lost. The fact is, that the passage of chalk into limestone is an event altogether modern, compared with the deposit of the chalk-mud.

Chalk is not only sometimes covered up by other deposit, such as clay, sand, and gravel, but also by the waters of the ocean, which between England and France conceal it from observation. In either case, by very simple means we can satisfy ourselves of its presence, by the boring-tool or the diving-bell.

With regard to the solid accumulations, it is not difficult to prove that there are in various places small patches of such substances; but in the great valley of the Thames these entirely cover a triangular area measuring nearly a hundred miles, between Hungerford, near Reading, and the Essex coast, the base of the triangle between Ipswich and Sheppy being fifty miles, and the area enclosed more than two thousand square miles of country. At various localities within this wide area the chalk has actually been reached by boring operations carried on for water; and the thickness of the deposits amounts here and there to more than a thousand feet. A somewhat similar but less extensive portion of the chalk is covered by similar deposits near Southampton.

On the other hand, there is a large area surrounded by chalk-hills, clearly traceable from Dover along the line of the North Downs, as far as Alton in Hampshire, there rounding and connecting with the South Downs, which terminate in the sea at Beachy Head. On the opposite shores of France, the chalk-hills in like manner recede. Within this range of chalk-hills are sands and clays, but no chalk is found either on or beneath the surface. The area thus excluded and cut out from what would otherwise be (as it probably once was) a continuous bed, is not very different in extent from that concealed by the clays on which London is built.

Across the German Ocean chalk is found at Faxoe in Denmark, and a soft limestone of the same kind, with the remains of similar animals in a similar state, on the banks of the Meuse in Belgium. But true soft chalk is here replaced by a crumbling mass, while in France, as already stated, it becomes harder. It is singular that in its integrity the chalk is almost confined to our own island, and, indeed, to the eastern side of it.

When holes are bored into it or cuttings made through it, chalk is found to be throughout very uniform in texture. It is also extremely and uniformly absorbent of water.

In the interior of a large mass of chalk, after a wet season, if the whole becomes saturated, it is certain that any empty spaces or cavities that exist will be also quite full; and if these are pierced by bore-holes and the water pumped out, a large supply may be procured. All the water that falls on the surface either of a chalk district, or of the porous rocks near it, will almost inevitably be conveyed into the chalk, the solid substance of which acts like a sponge, besides the surface being every where penetrated by small open cracks. The mass of the chalk thus acts as a kind of large reservoir, receiving the rain that falls, retaining it for a time, distributing it in the earth's interior, and at length giving it out again, for the benefit of men and animals, either from natural or artificial springs.

In its ordinary state true chalk is of little or no value as a building stone, owing to its softness and the readiness with which it is reduced to powder by exposure to damp air and frost. Still it has been used for interior ornamentation, owing to the great readiness with which it can be cut; and some instances of its employment in this way may be found in cathedrals in the east and south of England. Methods have been suggested by which the chalk in certain cases should be hardened, so as to be no longer subject to injury on exposure to the air. It could then be used for inside building and decoration with great advantage.

Most of the chalk is, as we all know, remarkable for its peculiar dead-white colour, although occasionally there are tinted varieties. The chalk near Flamborough Head in Yorkshire is naturally red; but the coloured chalks used for drawing are artificial productions.

The chief use of chalk is in the manufacture of lime, whether for mortar or for dressing land. For these purposes the consumption is very

large, the chalk being usually burnt in kilns, in the pit or quarry from whence it has been hewn, to avoid cartage. The lime thus obtained is very pure; but this is not any particular advantage, as lime made from limestones having a little clay, or sand, or iron, makes a mortar which sets more rapidly, and is harder than that made from pure carbonates of lime. Chalk, however, is used occasionally without burning to improve certain soils, and is the only kind of limestone of much value for such purposes.

When we seek for the origin of chalk and flint, and the circumstances that would seem necessary for their formation, the conclusions we are forced to accept are almost overwhelming. Chalk as a rock is remarkably uniform in its texture, and comparatively limited in its range, and is really much more widely spread than one might suppose, since the hardening it has in some places undergone modifies its more characteristic appearance. An inch cube of it would contain countless millions of fragments and complete shells of one small tribe of animals, and would be almost identical in its contents with a corresponding cube of mud taken from the bottom of the Atlantic any where between Valentia and Newfoundland, and mixed with ooze or mud from the mouth of the Thames. The Atlantic floor thus covered measures at least a thousand miles from east to west, and probably several hundred miles from north to south, its thickness, which is probably irregular, being quite unknown. The area of country occupied by chalk must be measured by hundreds of miles each way, and its thickness is known to amount to from six hundred to a thousand feet. Think of the number of individuals required for such vast accumulations. Truly the sands on the sea-shore are as nothing in comparison, and might be taken as the unit in so marvellous an arithmetic. All ordinary descriptions of number fade into insignificance in regarding these multitudes; and we must admit that nature has not adapted our faculties even to conceive and comprehend such combinations of the most minute atoms forming the largest mountain masses. And yet it is clear that time alone is needed to render possible the results we see in the chalk, even assuming that its whole mass was formed as the bed of an open ocean of deep water. Rapidity of growth and accumulation correspond with minuteness of organisation. The smaller the animal the more efficacious does it seem in producing large and abiding results, so that for every bone of reptile there are thousands of visible shells, and for every shell millions of these little invisible habitations of the simplest of nature's productions.

What thoughts crowd upon one in contemplating so simple an object as a chalk-pit! Here we seem to possess unchanged, except by being lifted up into sight, for the convenience of study, a section of an old ocean floor. Here are the proofs of ever-busy stirring life, most busy and most powerful and influential when acting in its simplest mode, and producing an infinite repetition of similar objects. Not, indeed, that these are monotonous in their resemblance, for here, as every where, the

type or general plan is the same; but each individual possesses its own personal existence, and some peculiarity that distinguishes it from its neighbour and brother atom.

There seems nothing now going on strictly analogous to the formation of beds of flint alternating with the fine chalky mud on the Atlantic ocean floor. In this analogy fails, and we are forced to assume that the flint, in a pasty state, or having the consistence of a jelly (as is the case in certain combinations with potash), was only an occasional deposit, no example of it being at present known to us.

Very rarely indeed rolled pebbles of granite, and other distant rock, have been found buried with the chalk and forming part of it. Out of the line of drifted icebergs there would be but few stones and pebbles conveyed now into the Atlantic a few hundreds of miles from the land, so that we need not be astonished that such an event was equally rare in former times. What goes on now is, indeed, only a repetition, with small variations, of previous events; and in geology, according to the best experience of scientific observers, we arrive at the conclusion so often quoted, that "there is nothing new under the sun."

The chalk must be regarded as one deposit of a great multitude—a mere unit in a host. But it abounds with interest and instruction; it illustrates a recent deposit of the most curious kind; it is itself very peculiar, and unlike most others; and it well deserves careful attention. Moreover, it is essentially an English rock, and produces a very distinct scenery in those parts of the country where it prevails. Being strongly marked and easily recognised, and also pretty widely spread, it forms an admirable starting-point for the young geologist; while its position in the great series of rocks adapts it still further for this educational use.

Aged Forty.

No *Times*! no book!—and I must wait
 A full half-hour 'ere Doldrum comes!
 Brown would find pictures in the grate,
 Jones watch the twirling of his thumbs:
 Both noble aims; but, after all,
 E'en such delights are apt to pall:—
 Confound the stupid place!
 What shall I do the time to pass?
 I'll give five minutes to the glass,
 And contemplate my face.

My face! Is this long strip of skin,
 Which bears of worry many a trace,
 Of sallow hue, of features thin,
 This mass of seams and lines, my face?
 The aspect's bad, the glass is wrong,
 Some cheating ray must fall along
 The surface of the plate!
 I've known myself now forty year,
 Yet never saw myself appear
 In such a sorry state.

I'll speak to Doldrum—wait awhile!
 Let's think a bit before deciding.
 Of late I've noticed Nelly's smile
 Has been less kind and more deriding.
 Can I be growing old? Can youth
 Have said farewell? The simple truth
 I'll have, no doubt concealing;
 Straightway I'll put my heart to school,
 And though I find I've played the fool,
 I'll speak out every feeling.

When introduced to Minnie Blair
 Last night, on waltzing purpose bent,
 I saw that rosebud smile and stare,
 Half pity, half astonishment.
 "Engaged," she murmured as I bowed;
 But 'ere I mingled with the crowd,
 I caught her muttered word—

"*I waltz with him!* How can Grace bring
Me such a pompous stout old thing?
She's really too absurd!"

A "stout old thing!" Oh, Lucy, love,
Ten long years resting in the grave,
Whose simply-sculptured tomb above
The feathery-tufted grasses wave,—
 Couldst thou hear such a term applied
 To him who won thee for his bride,
 Whose heart for thee nigh broke?
Round whose slim neck thine arm would twine
As round the elm the eglantine,
 Or ivy round the oak.

'Twas but last week, in Truefitt's shop,
A man, with aspect grave and calm,
Said I was "thinning at the top,"
And recommended some one's Balm!
 What "balm in Gilead" could recall
 The mother's touch that used to fall
 Upon my childish brow?
That soft sweet hand that used to toy
With thick curl-clusters of her boy—
 Where is that mother now?

Gone is my hack, my gallant roan,
Too hot for use. I've in his place
A cob "well up to fourteen stone,"
Of ambling gait and easy pace.
 The arm that stopped the Slasher's blow,
 Or clave Rhine's flood, hangs listless now,
 No grist to any "mill."
The legs so stalwart and so strong,
Which, all unfaltering, climbed Mont Blanc,
 Scarce crawl up Primrose Hill.

My heart!—my what?—ten years have passed,
Ten dreary years of London life
And worldly selfishness, since last
My heart was quickened in Love's strife:
 A look would make my pulses dance;
 How swift would dim my bright eye's glance
 When Grief turned on her main!

Naught makes my eye now brightly glow
Save Mûmm's Moselle, or Clos Vougeot,
Or Veuve Clicquot's champagne.

Yet I have known—ay, I have known,
If e'er 'twere given to mortal here,
The pleasure of the lowered tone,
The whisper in the trellised ear ;
The furtive touch of tiny feet,
The heart's wild effervescing beat,
The maddened pulses' play :
Those hearts are now all still and cold,
Those feet are 'neath the churchyard mould,
And I—have had my day !

What ! quiv'ring lips and eyelids wet
At recollection of the dead !
No well-bred man should show regret
Though Youth, though Love, though Hope be fled !
Ha ! Doldrum, man, come back ! What news ?
So Frank's gazetted to the Blues !
And Jack's got his divorce.
I'll toddle down towards the Club ;
A cutlet—then our usual “rub”—
You'll join us there, of course !

EDMUND YATES.

Holy Mr. Herbert.

To those worthy people who have followed me throughout my gossips about Robert Herrick, the Cupid-worshipping divine, and Richard Corbet, the jovial bishop of Oxford and Norwich, I make no apology for passing on the present occasion into a sanctuary more pure and holy than Herrick's Devonshire vicarage, and more melancholy than Corbet's fat bishopric. I have now to deal reverently with the memory of a man who in life was admired by the rich and beloved by the poor, while virtually belonging to both—a complete parson, a practical Christian, an apt scholar, and a deep-thinking poet.

"Christes love and his Apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himselfe."

Nor shall I be rendered gloomy in thought and constrained in style by the fact that the lay figure on which I purpose working is a model of noble piety and stainless ethics. That lay figure, most sympathetic reader, possesses, apart from the dark religious atmosphere enveloping it, many odd angles of individuality. With a comfortable relish of close human relationship with my heroes, the living and the dead, I have ascertained that "holy Mr. Herbert" had his little foibles. He was not quite perfect, thank goodness; albeit he stood as near the hierarchies as any man or woman I ever saw, heard of, or read about. He entered the vestibule of life with an iron will; and before he reached the inner altar, faith transmuted that invincible will into the solid gold of godliness. The Bible, his philosopher's stone and his *elixir vitae*, a purer elixir than that of alchemists like Friar Bacon, and quacks like Paracelsus, was ever in his strong hand, serving as a charm nobler than those of Circe, more potent than that which renewed old Æson; and, armed with it, he changed the hard couch of the recluse into the poet's bed of roses. One feels very small indeed on reading the stainless chronicle of his blameless days. For my own part, I confess with shame that I have never attained, and cannot hope to attain, to his high standard of morality; for I have my bad prejudices and my passions, I sometimes remember injuries, and in some of my dark moods I now and then lose heart. The dear old pastor was so gentle, so humorous (I use that adjective in its ancient and proper sense), so charitable, so Christian. Never tired of vexing his own brave flesh, he gazed with tender and compassionate eyes on the contaminated flesh of sinners. He delighted to probe men's wounds, and to apply his grand salve to them afterwards. He was open-hearted, open-tongued, and open-handed. Do you remember how he met a miserable old woman at Bemerton, when he first went to the living? How he first frightened her by his severe aspect and grave words; how he bade her open up her heart to him, and how she was voluble accordingly;

and how, not content with giving her spiritual consolation, he sent her on her way rejoicing with some silver money and two big warm blankets? Have you heard how his parishioners, on the first Sunday he preached to them, thought fit to vote him a humbug; and how, on the Sunday following (his heart and his pocket had been wide open during the past week), they began to regard him lovingly, and to deem him a "St. John with the Golden Beard"? Are you aware that he was a model son, a model husband, and a model pastor; and that, moreover, he was one of those indefatigable men of genius to whom, as florid Cicero saith, thought is identical with life, *quibus vivere est cogitare*? And do you know who knew him best and wrote of him most enthusiastically? Who but old Izaak Walton—most akin of all kindred spirits. Old Izaak was never tired of sounding the praises of that "learned and reverend divine," "holy Mr. Herbert," "who, as I am told, loved angling." My dear reader, if you are one of those who like my gossip, I am sure you have already heard much of Herbert through his quaint biographer. You have read Walton's *Lives* one hundred times; and you are no congenial reader if, after listening to me awhile, you do not betake yourself to your quiet Academe, and read the book once again. You cannot read it too often. "There are no colours in the fairest sky," says William Wordsworth, in his sonnet on the subject, "so fair as these;" and he continues,

"Methinks their very names shine pure and bright,
 Apart, like glow-worms in the woods of spring,
 Or lonely tapers shooting far a light
 That guides and cheers—or seen like stars on high,
 Satellites burning in a lucid ring,
 Around meek Walton's heavenly memory!"

The book constitutes the very gem of all beautiful biographies. About once a year I take the *Lives* and the *Complete Angler* with me to the Scotch streams; where, ravished away to an Elysium of "honest ale-houses, with sprigs of lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads stuck round the walls," or gently guided to a solemn council-chamber of worshipful poets, I care little whether that "generous fish," the trout, "that is sharper-sighted than any hawk," bites at my bait or not. It is enough to imagine myself among the old quaint gossips, in a pastoral land where Coridon sings tender songs, where fish abound, and where a fresh shower is sure to fall whenever Piscator wants to talk.

It was only the other day, when roaming among Scottish hills, that I determined to narrate again, with some additions, the tale of a quiet life; to photograph—to the best of my abilities, and in the space of a short article—the idiosyncrasies, poetical and human, of a man who "put perfection to the blush." The fish declined to bite, albeit

"the wind of the south
 Which blows the bait into a fish's mouth,"

was breathing balmily; and, stretched by the side of a murmuring

stream, I once more read Walton's voluminous *Life of Herbert*. So, determined to write about it on the first opportunity, I studied my lay figure accordingly, and pondered how I should make my poor modern drapery fall gracefully and suggestively around it. I knew all about Herbert; his poems were in my heart and on my lips. Reverently, when a very little boy, I had entered into his sweetly fragrant *Temple*, and had lisped out his stanzas about virtue at a beloved mother's knee. Just here, I must come before the literary curtain in my own person, as Goodman Rabelais was wont to do; but, unlike Rabelais, I do so with no wish to exhibit a satirical cat-o'-nine-tails. I am no egotist; and I wish to say that I write about these old poets because I love to write about them. I was full of them in very childhood; and I fancy that they must have given my mind its first impulse towards literary fogysm. The old poets served me for schoolfellows; for I was a solitary little boy, who lived far away from papa and mamma. Shakespeare was my *sacer vates*, my Prospero, my prince of poets, my magician. Next to him, the early clerical poets, and, among the rest, holy Mr. Herbert. I liked their quaint conceits, their droll diction, and their wholesome doctrine; while, inversely, I could never believe in Dr. Watts. I write poetry myself. Some of it has been printed in this Magazine, and a few like it. Is it any wonder that I write about old poets as of beloved friends and guides, and in a strain which some people persist in calling uncritical? They were my first instructors; they have been my physicians in sorrow—of which I have had my share—and in sickness; they first taught me to love beautiful things, and to express my love in poems—poems weak enough, goodness knows, though, like George Wilson's blisters, they have become my "bosom friends." The *Saturday Reviewer*, whom I like, lately wrote an essay deprecating what he styled "loving criticism;" and I know that there are readers who may consider me too appreciative. Well, a poor friendless lad, I came up to London, hoping to make my fortune by letters. Can I forget, while writing this essay, that I brought one book in my pocket (besides eighteenpence in money), and that the book was George Herbert's *Temple*? Can I forget how, when exiled *a mensâ et thoro*, I read the little poem called "Praise," and found in it a balm for empty stomach and weary eyelids? Can I forget how writers like Herbert, in the first instance, helped to discipline my brain and strengthen my hand, and thereby to gain me a fair field, no favour, and a circle of dear and genial friends? I have not made my fortune yet, but I have just given a hint of the value of my staunch old poets in helping us to make fortunes. So I will write about my clerical friends in my own way, if you please. When I become either spiteful or tiresome, I hope that Mr. Sala will shut TEMPLE BAR—over which he holds a mayor's sway—to my articles.

I write these lines late in the month of May, after having visited the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. I have had a good long look at Mr. Dyce's picture, "George Herbert at Bemerton." It has surprised and

delighted me. Here, surely, is a painter who thoroughly loves and appreciates the poet; who is intellectually cognisant that Herbert, like his writings, had one pervading quality, that of perfect repose. Those who know most about the poet will understand the picture best. It is a fine specimen of the best sort of art; it would even be worthy of a painter who, unlike Mr. Dyce, was not an R.A. It is in perfect artistic keeping with Walton's *Chronicle*, and with Herbert's *Temple*. The green leaves, the shady calm, the thoughtful figure, the cool meditative atmosphere surrounding all, are full of Herbert's own pensive, delicious, melancholy holiness. In this quiet garden, shut in from the turmoil of the busy world—in this calm metaphor of the poet's character—we feel conscious that the dove of peace has made its nest. Here holy Mr. Herbert meditated on scenes beyond the sunset. His genius ripened into beauty in quiet places; he felt the insufficiency of earthly things, feeding on fancies richer. I would ask those persons who have seen the picture to keep it in their mind's eye while I discourse of the poet and the poems. With Bemerton Parsonage for a background, the thoughtful beauty of poet and poems will show forth in perfect relief, and the one will tend materially to the easier conception of the other.

Noble blood—blood ennobled by rank and age, and in war, politics, and letters—flowed in the cool veins of George Herbert. His grandfather's grandfather, Sir Richard Herbert of Colebrooke, was distinguished alike for his valour and his generosity in the reign of the fourth Edward. Sir Richard's son was Steward, under King Henry VIII., of the Lordships and Marches of North Wales, East Wales, and Cardiganshire; he was "just and conscionable," a "great suppressor of rebels, thieves, and outlaws." Sir Richard's grandson, Edward, the grandfather of George Herbert, first acquired fortune as a soldier, and then, taking to the peaceable vocation of a justice of the peace, settled down in the family castle of Montgomery, Wales. This worthy was famed for his hospitality. At Blackhall, his family residence, he had "a very long table twice covered every meal with the best meats that could be gotten;" and the fame of his good cheer made the rustics cry, when a fowl arose, "Fly where thou wilt, thou wilt light at Blackhall!" His son Richard, the father of our George, was also a justice of the peace. His good dame, Magdalen, bore him seven sons and three daughters,—"Job's number and Job's distribution." Edward, the eldest son, was for some time English ambassador at the French Court, and, being made a baron by King James, afterwards became the well-known Lord Herbert of Chesham. Besides a Latin poem on Christianity, and a History of the reign of King Henry VIII., he wrote an Autobiography, from which I have gleaned some of the above details. Richard and William, the brothers next in age, took to the profession of arms. The former died in fighting for the freedom of the United Provinces of Holland; the latter served under the Danish crown, and died in the Netherlands. The fourth brother, Charles, died at college, after having been made a

fellow. The fifth was holy Mr. Herbert, the subject of my paper. Henry, the sixth, became Gentleman of the King's Privy Chamber, and Master of the Revels. The youngest brother, Thomas, was page to Sir Robert Cecil, commander of the English troops in the German wars. He exhibited great prowess at the siege of Juliers, and afterwards went to the East Indies. Thus the paths of the brothers separated; each went his peculiar way—

"Some, to the wars, to try their fortune there;
Some, to discover islands far away;
Some, to the studious Universities;"

and all acquitted themselves right nobly. The eldest daughter, a sickly plant, married "Sir Henry Jones of Albemarle." The second married Sir John Vaughan of Llwylidiart. The youngest married Sir John Brown, "Knight in Lincolnshire."

The mother of so exemplary and distinguished a family could hardly fail to be a woman above the "common stock of Eve." Duty was to her as inexorable as the *δαίμων* to Plato; but it wore a more tender and beautiful face. She was a devout Christian, and Christianity taught her how to live honestly and happily. *Brevis est institutio vitæ honestæ, si credas.* George first saw the light at Montgomery Castle, on the 3d of April 1593; and from that day to the day of her death his mother guarded him tenderly and taught him wisdom. Blest indeed was the poet in both parents. He could exclaim with Jean Paul, in the overflowing of his heart: "O thou who hast still a father and mother, thank God for it when thy soul is full of joyful tears, and needs a bosom wherein to shed them!" That day came; and holy Mr. Herbert, the complete parson, could weep the happy tears of honour on his mother's breast. Sir Richard, his father, died when our poet was in his fourth year.

When George was twelve years of age he was sent to Westminster School, where he became a great favourite with the head-master, Dr. Ireland. When fifteen years old, thanks to an inherent boyish liking for studious pursuits, he was elected a student of Trinity College, Cambridge. At college he not only began to write verses, but vowed (I use his own words) that his "poor abilities in poetry should be all and ever consecrated to God's glory." His mother "continued there with him," says Walton, "and still kept him under her own eye, as to see and converse with him daily; but she managed this power over him without any of such rigid sourness as might make her company a torment to her child, but with such a sweetness and compliance with the recreations and pleasures of youth, as did incline him willingly to spend much of his time in her company." At Oxford, mother and son made the acquaintance of Mr. Donne, the poet, to whom the former opened both her heart and her pocket. The friendship lasted till death. Donne sang, in more graceful and unaffected language than he was wont to use, the virtues of Lady Herbert, and his verses to her appear in his works as "the Autumnal," or ninth elegy. The good widow soon after contracted a marriage with

Sir John Danvers; and, being wooed from Oxford by the honied moon, left George to fight alone in the gardens of Academus. In 1612, Herbert became a Bachelor of Arts; in 1614, he was appointed a Minor Fellow of Trinity College; in 1615, he was made a Major Fellow; in the year following he received the degree of Master of Arts. He had thirty pounds a year over and above his fellowship. His father had left no will, "or such an imperfect one" (says Baron's *Cherbury's Autobiography*), "that it was not all proved;" but the liberality of the elder brother gave the "six brothers thirty pounds a-piece, yearly, during their lives," and the three sisters a thousand pounds a piece as marriage-portions.

At college George Herbert exhibited one failing,—a too great love for fine and quaint raiment; but that love was common among the students in those days. "Courtiers," says Willmott, "placed flowers behind their ears, and one of the most elegant noblemen of the age, William, Earl of Pembroke, a kinsman of Herbert, wore ear-rings." It was an age of vanity, an age of emptiness, a pinchbeck age—in more than one respect. The courtiers figured daily in all the colours of the rainbow, and the commoners followed suit after the court-cards. The Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, in 1614, imposed a fine of six shillings and eightpence, with a month's imprisonment, on any gentleman-student who was caught indulging in "strange pekadirelas, vast bands, huge cuffs, shoe roses, tufts, locks and tops of hair, unbecoming the modesty and carriage of students in so renowned an universitye." What wonder if the Puritans, disgusted with such frippery, protested against Dame Fashion, by jeering at her in sack-cloth and ashes? George Wither soon after "Stript" and "Whipt" such "Abuses," and got put into the Marshalsea for his trouble. The poets, in their poetry, emulated the eccentricities shown by the courtiers in their dresses. They dressed their bare thoughts in glittering ornaments, and murmured meaningless and tinsel compliments, as Agrippina's thrush warbled Greek in a palace at Rome. The amatory school of the Elizabethans was a more genuine school. Thomas Wyatt associated the tender passion with shivering lances and broken heads; Thomas Carew, with false gallantry, intrigue, and rouse. They were false and artificial. The jewels they dealt in resembled those manufactured in Birmingham; they were excellent enough jewels of their kind, and sparkled a little, but their great grandchildren could realise nothing on them. George Herbert did not long indulge his fondness for quaint clothes; though, till the day of his death, he retained his fondness for quaint imagery. The wits drank sack and canary; *cantilenis sua infortunia solantur*. The fine ladies smirked at the wits, and talked scandal with Lady Sneerwell's own "mellowness of sneer." The poets wrote about the periwigged Court-Cupid in their feeble and vacant way, or, as might be, in their rollicking way. But George Herbert, studying deeply at Trinity, was already meditating on themes more sacred, and preparing to build with his brain a *Temple* in which future generations might worship God.

Not but that, as I have already said, George Herbert had his little foibles; not that he imagined, at the very outset, that the Parcae, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, intended him for the pastor of a small country cure. However, Clotho, at his birth, held a holy book over him; Lachesis wove the fine fabric of his nature into a life almost as beautiful as that book; till Atropos, stepping in with her scissors, cut the slender tie which bound him to earth, and gave his spirit scope to use its wings. His letters show that he was a hard student. He was in bad health, too, sickly and delicate. His "infirmities were both painful and costly." Writing for funds, in Lent, he says: "I am forbid to eat any fish, so that I am fain to diet in my chambers at my own cost; for in our public halls, you know, is nothing but fish and white meats." Further on, "I even study thrift, and yet I am scarce able, with much ado, to make one half-year's allowance shake hands with the other; and yet, if a book of four or five shillings come in my way, I buy it, though I fast for it; yea, sometimes of ten shillings." On the 21st of October 1619 he was appointed Orator of the University. "The orator's place," he says, in a letter to his father-in-law, "is the finest place in the university, though not the gainfullest, yet that will be about thirty pounds per annum; but the commodiousness is beyond the revenue; for the orator writes all the university letters, makes all the orations, be it to king, prince, or whatever comes to the university: to requite these pains, he takes place next the doctors, is at all the assemblies and meetings, and sits above the proctors, is regent or non-regent at his pleasure, and such like gaynesses, which will please a young man well." Herbert's office soon placed him prominently under the notice of majesty. King James had presented to the university a copy of that shrewd book of his, the *Basilicon Doricon*; or, *his Majesty's Instruction to his dearest son Henry the Prince*; and the Orator acknowledged the gift in a Latin epistle so neat as to cause the gratified monarch to make inquiries about the author. "He took him to be the jewel of that University." King and subject soon became personally known to each other, to their mutual gratification. On one of his royal visits, James was attended by Lord Bacon, who thereupon made Herbert's acquaintance. Bacon and Herbert became very intimate; and the former dedicated his translation of the Psalms of David to "his very good friend Mr. George Herbert." The gentle and unassuming dignity of the Orator won for him the affection of high and low. Soon afterwards King James gave him two hundred pounds a year as a sine-cure.

George was very pious and pure; but you will not be surprised to hear that these royal favours rendered him ambitious. It gratifies your humble servant, who is so far from perfect, to learn that holy Mr. Herbert played before high heaven, while the angels smiled, some of the fantastical tricks of a courtier. In 1618, Bishop Williams informs us he analysed an oration of King James, "showed the concinnity of the parts, the propriety of the phrase, the height and power of it to move the affections,

the style utterly unknown to the ancients, who could not conceive what kingly eloquence was." In a fit of frailty he began to shirk college, and to loiter in the train of majesty. Then he thought of the amenities of court-life, and reflected how nice it would be to become Secretary of State. But these anticipations were destined to be disappointed; he was forced to plunge Mercury into the waters of Lethe, and to change Mercury's words into the songs of Apollo. His rich patrons died, and they were followed across Styx by the king himself; and I much fear me that the orator, had he possessed any silver to pay Charon, would, in his disappointment, have tried to follow the travellers, who were never to return from the unknown bourne. Wiser thoughts intervened. *Vanitas vanitatum!* He had been building an official palace on Goodwin Sands. "I will labour," he cried, "to make the name of priest honourable by consecrating all my learning and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of that God that gave them: knowing that I can never do too much for Him who has done so much for me as to make me a Christian." He took occasion to point out the vices of clergymen. The ministers, you see, stood rather low in the social grade in those days. Moreover, there was a great deal of favouritism in the giving, and much charlatan-ism in the seeking, of livings and benefices. After pursuing his divine studies for some little time, holy Mr. Herbert found his good resolutions rewarded by the gift of the prebend of Leighton, in Huntingdon. Mr. Prebendary (we are told on good authority) did much good in his village. He laid out a large sum in rebuilding the church; taking care that desk and pulpit should be of uniform height, in order "that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren, and have an equal honour and estimation." In 1627 Lady Danvers, his mother, died. Donne preached her funeral sermon at Chelsea. "She gave not at some great days or solemn goings abroad," wrote the doctor in this beautiful composition; "but, as God's true almoners, the sun and moon, that pass on in a continual doing of good; as she received her daily bread from God, so daily she distributed it to others." On this occasion, Walton, who was one of the audience, "saw and heard Mr. John Donne weep and preach." The sermon was shortly afterwards published in a volume, to which was affixed Herbert's Latin and Greek poems to the memory of his mother,—*Parentalia, auctore G. Herbert; Memoria Matris Sacrum*.

About two years afterwards, Herbert saw Jane Danvers, daughter of his friend Charles Danvers, and, three days after the first interview, he led her to the altar of hymen. The father, who died just before the marriage, had freely expressed his desire that his daughter and the poet, yet unknown to each other, should be united. Aubrey tells me that Jane Danvers was a "handsome *bona roba*," meaning a plump figure, "and genereuse." The marriage, according to both Walton and Bishop Sanderson, was a most happy one. Six months after it took place, the living of Bemerton, a small hamlet near Salisbury, became vacant, and the Earl

of Pembroke, a relation of the poet, requested King Charles to bestow it on Herbert. "Most willingly to Mr. Herbert," said Charles, "if it be worth his acceptance." *Apropos* of this gift, and of the ill-fated king's admiration for the recipient, I may state that the Bible and George Herbert's *Temple* became Charles's constant instructors when, years after, he was in prison, preparing to atone for the wrongs he had committed against people and parliament. The king's copy of Herbert was afterwards in the possession of "Tom Martin of Palgrave."

So holy Mr. Herbert broke (with pain, I am sure) the ties which bound him to Alma Mater. He threw up his last stake for distinction (and who says it might not have been a winning stake?), and retired to preach Christ among pious parishioners. Cambridge had one chaplet less to boast of; albeit the mathematic old lady was nourishing future greatness. Fair-haired John Milton had bidden adieu to Westminster School, had parted amicably with John Gill the usher, and was making friends with Lycidas, not then dead, in the college-hall and the quadrangle. There, too, was a fair-favoured youth named Jeremy Taylor, who was destined to become the king of honest divines and the prince of prose poets. Others there were, studying in the laps of "those reverend bedlams, colleges, and schools." Thomas Fuller was cramming in Latin and Greek, and startling the sober halls with flashes of sagacious fun. Phineas Fletcher, whom Wood styles "a learned man and an excellent poet," and who wrote that strange book entitled *The Purple Island*, was still, after being beneficed at Hilgay in Norfolk, to be seen occasionally at Exeter College. Robert Herrick had been Herbert's college contemporary, and now he was rustivating at Dean Prior. Crashaw was at Peter House College, making slow but sure "steps" to the poetic "Temple." Waller, unfortunately for himself, had just left King's College, being made a member of parliament in his eighteenth year. So, what with the sons who had lately left her, and the sons who were just beginning to add to her honour, Cambridge was surrounded by a noble and happy family. But Herbert gave up the great libraries, the learned halls, and the fine college companions. Disgusted with his former court projects, he determined, "not to woo honour, but to wed it;" and settling down to his work, to agree with Sir Thomas Overbury's *Milkmaid* in accounting "no bravery in the world like decency." On the 26th of April 1630, left alone in the church, according to law, he tolled his own induction into the Parsonage of Bemerton, that all the parish might be aware of his arrival; and was shortly afterwards discovered, by a friend who peeped in at the window, stretched prostrate on the church-floor before the altar. He then fetched Jane his wife to Bemerton. "You are now a minister's wife," he said to her, "and must so far forget your father's house as not to claim a precedence of any of your parishioners; for you are to know that a priest's wife can challenge no precedence or place but that which she purchases by her obliging humility; and I am sure places so purchased do best become them." So the *bona roba* saluted her lord,

and promised to be good. After rebuilding the parish church, he preached his first sermon,—“in a most florid manner, with great learning and eloquence,” and taking his text from the proverbs of the wisest man that ever lived (believe me, dear reader, he *was* the wisest),—“Keep thy heart with all diligence.”

It was now that he merited and gained the title of “holy Mr. Herbert.” Weak in body, he was strong in soul; while stern as justice, he was mild as mercy; while pure and blameless himself, he could comfort and compassionate the erring. The rustics doffed hats reverently to him as he passed them in his rambles along country roads; or, mayhap, they approached humbly, and sought help from the lips of honey, from the ever-open hand. The old women grew garrulous at his side; the matrons took his advice on household matters, as well as on matters of higher import; the maidens blushed at his tender counsel. Morning and evening prayer took place daily in the church, “at the canonical hours of ten and four.” He was strictly and wholly orthodox, never deviating from the progressive ritual of the four seasons. The humble labourers “did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert’s Saint’s bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him, and would then return back to their plough.” Shortly after his induction to Bemerton, he composed his prose poem, *A Priest to the Temple; or the Country Parson, his Character and Rule of Holy Life*. In this book he set down the form and character of a complete pastor, that he might have a mark to aim at. It was not published until after his death. “It much contenteth me,” said Fuller, shortly before its publication, “that the posthume remains (shavings of gold are carefully to be kept) of that not less pious than witty writer, are shortly to be put forth into print.” Many are the beautiful rules set down for the guidance of the Complete Parson; and not the least significant ones are those which appear, at a glance, most trivial. “Plain, but reverend and clean, without spots, or dust, or smell,” must be the parson’s attire. The furniture of his house must be plain, but “clean, and whole, and sweet,” being perfumed by his garden;—charity is his only other perfume. He eats and drinks moderately of plain food and cool water. He arises with his family on Sunday morning, and prays with them; then he sets himself to the consideration of the day’s duties. He reads “divine service twice fully,” preaching in the morning and catechising in the afternoon. “The rest of the day he spends either in reconciling neighbours that are at variance, or in visiting the sick, or in exhortations to some of his flock by themselves, whom his sermons cannot, or do not, reach.” And thus, in content and holiness, in consoling, in exhorting, in relieving, and in strengthening, did the days of the complete parson, George Herbert, glide on. He lived calmly and happily, with no gall in his heart, no melancholy settled in his spleen; full of that large faith in heaven and earth without which “man’s life is poor as beast’s.” He sought for faith, and found

her, in the little garden of Bemerton; as Socrates sought for truth, and found her not, in the bowers of Academus—in *Sylvia Academi querere verum*.

For recreation and relief Herbert flew now and then to the fairy realms of the Muses. Not only did he invoke the Sisters with the magic gray goose-quill; he worshiped rapturously at the feet of Polyhymnia the harmonious. A friend told old Aubrey "that he (Herbert) had a very good hand on the lute, and that he set his own lyrics or sacred poems." He got up private musical parties, in which he played a prominent part. So deep was his delight in music, and so sacred did he deem its functions, that he was wont to walk twice a week to Salisbury to join in the choral service at the Cathedral. Here is one of the poems in which he sings, and most beautifully, the glory of

"CHURCH MUSIC.

"Sweetest of sweets, I thank you; when displeasure
Did through my body wound my mind,
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
A dainty lodging me assigned.
Now I in you without a body move,
Rising and falling with your wings;
We both together sweetly live and love,
Yet sometimes say, 'God help poor kings!
Comfort, I'll die; for if you part from me,
Sure I shall do so, and much more;
But if I travel in your company,
You know the way to heaven's door."

The above is taken from the *Temple*, and it is fit music for so holy a place. Is it not sweet, dear and gentle reader, to think of holy Mr. Herbert, as he sat in the study or in the garden, as he sat in a calm cool spot, such as Mr. Dyce has painted, and sang to the music of his lute such lyrics as the one just quoted? This love for music may have given its tenderness to a character which might otherwise have become unpleasantly austere. It was a calm intellectual sentiment of beauty, blossoming among gloomy thoughts, and yearning quietly toward the sun of pleasure. It was part of that natural *politesse du cœur*, which not only made the good pastor charitable, but rendered his charity refined and graceful. His life may be said, in his own words, to have been "a bridal of the earth and sky;" and music was one of the pursuits wherein he reconciled the two elements—heavenly faith with human joy. Contented and happy, whether playing on his lute or swelling the choir in Salisbury Cathedral, he could forget all earthly distinction—all honours made "to glut the senses of an epicure." "Shower down thy mitres," he could exclaim, in the words of Sterne's Sentimentalist, "if it seems good unto Thy Divine Providence, upon those heads which are aching for them." He could forget the favours of the success-worshipping mob. Pleasure came to him spiritualised, in such innocent pastimes; she did not, as often happens, squat incubus-like on

his shoulders, with a face hideous and ugly as that of "Polyphemus in his anthropophagous cavern."

But Heaven had so willed it that holy Mr. Herbert should pass away speedily, like the music he loved so; that he should only see thirty-nine years on earth. Soon after he went to Bemerton, he was visited by the first symptoms of consumption. He had always been delicate. Presently the physical man became so weak as to be almost unable to go through his pastoral duties; but it was with difficulty that the mental man could be persuaded to give up work. At last, however, the good pastor yielded to the solicitations of his friends, and resigned his duties to Bostock, his curate. The mortal was preparing to put on immortality. In his illness he handed the manuscript of the *Temple* to a clergyman who was visiting him, a Mr. Duncan, with a request that he would give it to his intimate friend, his "dear brother," Nicholas Ferrar. "Desire him to read it," said Herbert; "and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made public; if not, let him burn it, for I and it are less than the least of God's mercies." On the Sunday before he expired he called for his lute. It was brought to him, and he sang to its accompaniment the fifth stanza of his poem on the Sabbath:

"The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal glorious King.
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope;
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope."

"Mr. George Herbert, Esq., Parson of Fuggleston and Bemerton," says the register, "was buried 3 day of March 1632." Jane, his good dame, survived him many years. Six years after his death she married Sir Robert Cook, by whom she had a daughter. It is said that she had in her possession a quantity of Mss. by her first husband; and Walton tells us that "they (the manuscripts) and Highnam House (Cook's residence) were burnt together by the late rebels, and so lost to posterity." Gossip John Aubrey, however, tells a more plausible story. He avers that Herbert "writ a folio in Latin, which, because the parson of Hineham could not read it, his widowe (then wife to Sir Robert Cook) condemned to the uses of good housewifery." Nothing is more possible than that the Highnam parson, like many others of the cloth, had forgotten his Latin; at any rate, John Aubrey has lynched him in the eyes of antiquaries. The dame we pardon, for she might readily have been imposed upon by the unscholarly pastor.

Thus lived and died holy Mr. Herbert, "with his face (saith Mrs. Browning) as the face of a spirit, dimly bright." Besides his *Temple*, and the books I have alluded to, he left behind him some fragments, chiefly in Latin. His Latin verses, in answer to Andrew Melvin the Presbyterian (*Georgii Herberti Angli Musæ Responsoriæ, ad Andream*

Melvini Scoti Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoriam), form a savagely satirical reply to some strictures on the ordinances of the Church of England. This reply is the bitterest thing he ever penned; but it was written in the heyday of youth. He translated Cornaro's *Treatise on Temperance*; and made a collection of proverbs called *Jacula Prudentum, or Outlandish Proverbs, Sentences, &c.* I will quote three good proverbs from this collection. "He that studies his content wants it." "A cool mouth and warm feet live long." "Would you know what money is, go borrow some." None of his works were printed until after his death; but most of them, when published, were very successful. *The Temple, or Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*—first printed in Cambridge in 1633—went through six editions in eight years. Let me now guide you reverently (reverently, both because the place is holy, and because the maker thereof was a man of men) into this *Temple*, wherein the memory of holy Mr. Herbert is embalmed for us, among beautiful gems of thought and caskets of golden diction.

Pause here, in the "church porch," and read the table of laws hung therein, for the guidance of those who would seek the inner altar. Beware of lust. Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame when once it is within thee; be not a beast in courtesy. Swear not; lie not; look to thy mouth, for diseases enter there. Use sometimes to be alone; salute thyself, and examine your soul. Be thrifty, not covetous. Never exceed thine income.

"Laugh not too much: the witty man laughs least;
For wit is news only to ignorance."

Favour high projects, but be humble and magnanimous.

"Be not surety, if thou art a father.
Love is a personal debt. I cannot give
My children's right, nor ought to take it; rather
Both friends should die than hinder them to live.
Fathers first enter bonds to nature's ends,
And are her sureties ere they are a friend's."

Scorn no man's love, though of mean degree; for "love is a present for a mighty king." "Man is God's image, but a poor man is Christ's stamp to boot." Uncover in church. Judge not the preacher. These are moral laws, you see, and they form the basis of the religious ones. Pass on: there is the "altar," and on it the "sacrifice." You are next inducted into the holy ceremonies and seasons, the ritual and sacraments, and the prayers for divers occasions. Mark the church-floor: the square speckled stone is Patience; the black stone, chequering all, is Humility; the gentle rising, leading to the choir, is Confidence; the sweet cements of all are Love and Charity. Glance at the windows, decorated with scriptural subjects, and in which doctrine and life, colours and light, mingle beautifully. Looking upward, you perceive the "cross." And now, after "prayer" and "holy baptism," pass on again to the altar, from which a censer called "life" is diffusing light and incense.

"LIFE.

I made a posy while the day ran by :
 Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
 My life within this band.
 But Time did beckon to the flowers, and they
 By noon most cunningly did steal away,
 And withered in my hand.
 My hand was next to them, and then my heart ;
 I took, without more thinking, in good part
 Time's gentle admonition.
 Who did so sweetly death's sad taste convey,
 Making my mind to smell my fatal day,
 Yet sug'ring the suspicion.
 Farewell, dear flowers ! sweetly your time ye spent,
 Fit, while ye lived, for smell or ornament,
 And after death for cures.
 I follow straight without complaints or grief,
 Since if my scent be good, I care not if
 It be as short as yours."

With our thoughts made purer and our hearts made stouter by the quiet beauty and stately music of this monument of dead holiness, let us again pass out. But I trust, fair and gentle reader, that you will take my advice, and visit the *Temple* again, alone. Let your visit, moreover, be a longer one ; for the beauty of the place is a beauty that grows upon one, and cannot be drunk in it at a glance.

Coleridge said truly, that the quaintness of Herbert's poetry lay rather in the thoughts than in the diction. The language itself is a pure well of English undefiled ; though what Shakespeare's Armado styled the "sweet smoke of rhetoric" is not wholly wanting. Not that the thoughts lack loveliness ; if it were so, the poetry would be bad. Poetry, in the narrow sense, is imagination set to tune—fancy rendered delicious by a regular succession of harmonious sounds. "You cannot build palaces on the sea-waves," said some Persian poet ; and you cannot build the name of a poet on meaningless and restless rhymes. The thoughts of Herbert, naked and unadorned, expressed prosily and unmusically, would still possess intellectual value, though proportionally wanting in imaginative attraction. Yet let us not undervalue the auxiliary value of mere language. A poetical abstraction is absolutely useless, unless it gratifies the craving of the intellect for enjoyment ; and an arbitrary connection exists between ideas themselves and the music through which they are conveyed. Herbert's English, I repeat, is a well pure and wholesome ; and I wish some admirers of Mr. Carlyle would dip their buckets into it. Herbert's poetry is good poetry, and good verse too. As verse, it is coated like sugar-plums, and tickles the palate ; as poetry, it must be digested to be nutritious. Let us not, however, identify verse and poetry, or we shall run into errors in our literary estimates. Boccaccio tells us that individuals who wore the surplice, and walked about with shaven polls, and who were deemed perfect by worthy Italian burghers, were far from being priests of God.

Holy Mr. Herbert stands very high as a poet, but he stood higher, to my thinking, as a country clergyman. His saintly life was worthy old Isaak Walton's *Chronicle*; and any man worthy of Walton's eulogium must necessarily have been a fine thinker and a Christian gentleman. Charles Cotton—the friend of Walton, who loved angling, and who translated Montaigne so nicely—has written about Herbert in a fitting strain of poetry :

“ And Herbert: he whose education,
Manners, and parts, by high applauses blown,
Was deeply tainted with ambition ;

And fitted for a court, made that his aim ;
At last, without regard to birth or name,
For a poor country cure does all disclaim ;

Where, with a soul composed of harmonies,
Like a sweet swan, he warbles as he dies
His Maker's praise and his own obsequies.”

R. W. B.



Spell-bound.

I.

It seems to me that there is very little pleasure in locomotion under conditions that compel one to be entirely helpless and passive in the matter. The vaunted exhilaration of rapid movement vanishes when it is felt to proceed from causes quite independent of oneself. Whirling along in an express-train even is rather depressing than exciting; individuality is so completely surrendered, with all voice in, or control over, route, or speed, or pause. Finger the reins, tug at an oar, handle the helm, or but haul a rope now and then, and your mind moves with your body, and shares in the glow of exertion and the excitement of voluntary action. But a mere chattel locked in a padded carriage, stagnating, uncared for, not consulted, one settles into deep gloom and intense tedium, praying for the end of the journey and the resumption of personality.

So I thought travelling down in the spring of the year to Chewton Manor House to pay a long-promised visit. A week's visit only, for I could spare no more time; and, indeed, the promise had been reluctantly given, and I entered upon its fulfilment unwillingly. Imperceptibly a solitary student-life in secluded chambers in London betrays one into habits of thought and conduct at variance with prescription. Crotchets and caprice undermine routine and settled programme, and bring about unfitness and disinclination for life in "other people's houses." The continued practice of existing in accordance with one's own momentary views simply renders it difficult at last to yield to the different plans of others.

Why, then, did I go to Chewton Manor House at all? I had been ill; I had grown tired of my work, low-spirited, with a sort of feeling that my nerves had somehow unnaturally worked their way to the surface, and rendered me acutely sensitive. Small disappointments annoyed me extremely, unexpected noises set my heart beating, a sudden knock at the door startled me. I slept but lightly and badly, and rose unrefreshed by my rest. "Pack up a carpet-bag and go into the country for a week's holiday," said every body to whom I made complaint of my symptoms. Then I met William Forde, and he begged me at once to join him at Chewton Manor, his father's house, situated in a pleasant western county. I looked forward to a week's idleness, and the sight of green trees, and a blue horizon of waving hills dying into the sky, quite restoring me to health. So I took my ticket, and found myself on the South-Western Railway.

And, had I not gone on my own account, I believe I should have gone on William Forde's. There was something strange, as I fancied, in the way in which he pressed on me this country visit; it was more like

imploing than inviting. Such restless wandering eyes, white face, and quivering lips the while he spoke ! But then he had always been of a nervous, excitable, sanguine temperament, of most delicate organisation. Quite as a boy at school he was the same, I remember. Much younger than I, he had been commended to me as an elder boy, and to my care, by his father, who had been an early and intimate friend of my father's. I am afraid I discharged my trust with the indifference usual to school-boys similarly situated. My interest in my *protégé* was not without bounds. He was a little, shy, white-haired, white-faced boy, with rather a shrinking, frightened manner, inclined to submit patiently to school ill-treatment, though now and then he had been known to fire up into angry resistance, when he would draw himself together, toss his long hair from his forehead, and, his eyes dilating and gaining in colour and brilliance, he would stand prepared to do battle against any odds. The acquaintance, commenced at school, we had carried into after-years. The friendship of our parents descended to us in a sort of hereditary way, and if it might not be very fervid, it was still substantial enough. While he was renewing his request that I would visit Chewton Manor, I remembered that I had heard a rumour of his engagement and approaching marriage. I adverted to this; but he put the remark away from him hurriedly, and as though ill pleased with it.

"Not yet, not yet; there's nothing settled—nothing;" and he turned to other topics. I have noticed that men have often a shamefaced manner of speaking of marriage when it affects themselves, as though, from a bachelor point of view, the subject had a very weak and assailable front; but I never saw any one spring away from it so strangely as did William Forde. It was not easy to light upon any very satisfactory explanation of my friend's manner. There might be other causes certainly, but still to his old excitability much might be referable, and perhaps he also had been hard working in London, and fretted, and weakened, and shaken by his work, longing too for change of air and scene.

A pleasant sunshiny day, the green of the trees and fields very young and transparent, and the sky very clear and blue; the old Manor House looking almost handsome with such attractive surroundings, though naturally inclined to be an ugly building, it must be confessed. Of a Queen-Anne date probably—but much patched, and altered, and repaired of later years—the old red bricks coated with stucco, the clock-tower diminished by one-half, and foolish dwarf battlements—a burst of bad taste on the part of a proprietor of half a century back—surmounting the coping-stone. A flat-faced building, the cream-coloured stucco here and there relieved by an agreeable patch of ivy—like a *mouche* on the cheek of beauty—ivy, too, over the ill-shaped porch; the upper windows, of many panes, with broad white sashes, the lower modernised upon French principles, with plate-glass, and opening to the ground. Very pleasant and quiet, almost drowsily so; for there is a sort of balm and opiate to London nerves in the deep quiet of the country, now broken only by the

musical chatterings of the birds in the lime-trees, and the contralto tones of the cuckoo's ceaseless song of two notes.

Very quiet,—William Forde more at ease and repose, with yet something in his manner I cannot account for. Old Mr. Forde, a stately, tall, fair, old gentleman, with quite white hair,—much aged since I had seen him,—courtly, kindly, but probably able to be stern on occasion, however. Mrs. Forde—not William's mother, but Mr. Forde's second wife—a delicate little invalid woman, appearing but seldom, and taking her meals in her own room at early hours. The second wife's two daughters, William's half-sisters, Blanche and Ada, girls of about ten and twelve, and their French governess, Mdle. d'Hérion, very dark, with thick black hair in hard coils at the back of her head. I can see them from the window of my bedroom—this had been a sort of study, apart from the library, and was on the ground-floor—as they pass and repass along the turfed terrace-walk in front of the house. I can note the delicate pink-and-white necks of the young ladies, and the golden yellow of their hair, contrasting markedly with the dark warm southern complexion of the governess; but their features are almost hidden by their mushroom-shaped garden-hats. These seem to constitute the household.

"I am afraid you will find it rather dull here," said Mr. Forde, courteously; "do what we may to entertain you. Ours is a very quiet house. Mrs. Forde's health is so delicate, and my daughters are yet so young, that we see very little society. By and by we must hope to do better. When William marries, and my girls grow up, we shall be able to present to you a gayer household, I dare say. The chief attractions here now, and I hope you may find them sufficient for your too short stay with us, consist in the fine open country, and the pure air, and the strict rest offered by our retired family-habits. These, I trust, may be of benefit to you. You Londoners have always a pale and jaded look, as it seems to us. You stand in need of pure air and repose. I always tell William so when he comes from town."

There had been a talk before luncheon of our riding out to enjoy the fine view across the downs from Crockton Ridge, with a plan of calling at Hurst Rectory on our way back. William had even gone round to the stable to give directions to Jacob, the groom, concerning the horses to be employed. This arrangement, however, was disturbed. Stepping from my window on to the lawn, I found a young lady in a riding-habit talking to the French governess and her pupils,—or rather, perhaps, to the pupils, with an occasional acknowledgment of the presence of Mdle. d'Hérion. Miss Catherine Vere had come over from the Rectory, it appeared. She had brought with her music for Blanche, who was just beginning to learn singing, and drawings of horses for Ada to copy. She looked very pretty, leaning on the balustrade of the terrace, laughing with Blanche, teasing Ada with her whip, or stooping to pat the head of her great Newfoundland dog Jupiter, who had run with her all the way from the Rectory, and was now panting hard with pendent tongue and bril-

liant eyes, very happy indeed, on the ground at her feet. Now and then she vouchsafed a word or two to Mdlle. d'Hérion, more, as it seemed, for form's sake than from any other motive. Her becoming riding-hat—there was no feather in it, merely some violets, freshly-gathered and stuck in its band—just shaded her brilliant hazel eyes. She had not the beauty of evenness and proportion of feature, so much as of exquisite colour and expression. There was a dense cloud of auburn hair upon her shoulders, and a crimson neck-ribbon cast pleasant warm reflections upon her rounded chin and white neck. Her voice was irresistibly charming, it was so silvery and musical. Altogether Catherine Vere, the Rector's daughter, struck me as a most interesting and winning person indeed. She was greeted quite as a favourite of the house, most warmly perhaps by old Mr. Forde, but kindly also by William, with a tinge of formality that might proceed from his constitutional shyness, and affectionately by the sisters. Mdlle. d'Hérion only seemed to gain no light from her sunshine presence. In answer to Miss Vere's remarks, or questions addressed to her, she spoke calmly but coldly, in correct English, though with an evident foreign accent. One might almost imagine that there existed between these two women some settled antipathy, less expressed than understood.

Miss Vere stayed all the afternoon, riding away on her white pony, with Jupiter bounding along at her side, just as the first dinner-bell was sounded. No entreaty could induce her to remain longer, and she refused to entertain for a moment the proposition that we should ride back with her to the Rectory. Was there not a tone of pique in her distinct refusals? and was I wrong in fancying that William was abstracted, and cold, and oppressed in her presence? and that this disconcerted and vexed her?

"I am glad you have seen our charming Catherine," said old Mr. Forde, as we sat down to dinner. "She has won all our hearts. William should think himself very fortunate." But William made no sign; spoke no word. Was this the lady rumour had declared him to be engaged to marry? I asked myself. It seemed to me that Mr. Forde was pained by his son's silence, and that the subject had been for some time one of trouble to both; why, I could not guess.

A very quiet dinner-table; only my host, his son, and myself. Mrs. Forde had dined in her own room. The sisters and their governess dined always at one o'clock in the schoolroom. William spoke but little. His father sustained the conversation with grace and cordiality. The wine was very good; indeed, good wine seems now to be only found in old country houses. Dinner over, we strolled on the terrace and through the wire-gate of the garden into the park. A cigar or two, and we returned to coffee in the drawing-room. Mrs. Forde remained for half an hour on the sofa, looking very pale and fragile amongst her splendid shawls. William, her step-son, sat near her; kind and attentive to her, watchful to anticipate her wishes. I chatted with Blanche and Ada, who were

beginning to lose their bashfulness a little. Soon we were great friends, and I was drawing caricatures for Ada. I interchanged now and then a word or two with Mdlle. d'Hérion. She seemed intelligent, with perhaps almost too absolute a self-possession; a handsome brunette, large dusky eyes, and sweeping black eyelashes, and a low evenly-sustained voice. She bestowed great care upon her pupils, and they were evidently fond of her. She had a rather still motionless manner, and had a habit of sitting with her small supple hands folded before her.

It was quite summer weather, although so early in the year. We were tempted after coffee to step from the drawing-room on to the lawn again, and watch the moon rise in the distance, and light up the tangle of boughs in the copse. Very peaceful: I was so accustomed to noise, that it seemed to me almost oppressively so. A quiet week in this retired family, and I shall be thoroughly set up again, I thought, and almost said. What a change is this from town! How purifying this seems! Really, people ought to be very good in the country.

"I am glad indeed to see you down here," said William Forde, who was smoking a cigar by my side. I fancied there was a trembling in his voice as he spoke. "I have so much to say to you, to ask you about."

Certainly he was disturbed.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"No, not now. I can't tell you now. You want a light, don't you? Take one from me;" and he proffered his cigar. How his hand shook! I could see plainly it did so, even in that dim light.

"Pray rely upon me, if I can serve you in any way."

"You saw Catherine—Miss Vere—who was here to-day?" he asked abruptly. "Well, my father is bent upon my marriage with her. Counts it a settled thing; an engagement which time must now soon bring to fulfilment."

"Well, he has had grounds for thinking this? You are engaged to Miss Vere?"

"Perhaps;" and he turned away. "I think so; I fear so."

"*Fear so!* William, think what you say! You do not love her?"

"I *did* love her; but—my good friend, don't look at me like that. You shall know all, indeed you shall." Then he stopped and wiped his forehead. A strange look came into his eyes; he stood for a moment like one spell-bound, and then was seized with a shivering, which set his teeth chattering.

"You are not well."

"Quite well," he answered. "No, not now. I can't speak of it now."

There was the sound of a piano.

"Who is playing?" I asked; for he remained silent, and seemed disinclined to continue our conversation.

"Mdlle. d'Hérion."

A curious wailing melancholy tune, that somehow influenced and

possessed me. We returned to the drawing-room. The lamp was now upon the table, and the candles of the piano were lighted.

"What music is that, mademoiselle?"

"Do you like it? It is a mazourka by Chopin. You will like this better, I think."

And she played another air of singular beauty, with a marvellous swooning entrancement about it. Perhaps this was in some part due to her perfect performance. Then it was I noticed that her eyes, which had seemed to me before to be rather opaque in their blackness, were now vividly luminous; there was, too, an underflush in her dark cheek which gave her a look of passionate earnestness; it was hard not to quail before the unaccountable power of those kindling eyes. William Forde was gazing at her with a rapt expression in his white face. Was there some spell about this French woman? With an effort I interrupted her playing. I was really glad to break its effect upon me by addressing her:

"Do you sing, mademoiselle?"

She shook her head; then turning to William Forde said,

"*You* will sing."

He made no answer; she bent over some music-books. Surely she then whispered to my friend,

"Yes, Guillaume, *you* will sing."

I could not have been mistaken. More as though in obedience to her than from any voluntary action on his own part, he sang an Italian *aria*, which she accompanied admirably. He had a light tenor voice of agreeable quality, marred by a curious tremulousness. Afterwards she played again; the same character of music as before, except that now a sort of throbbing feverishness took possession of the melody, and enhanced its former witchery. I watched her small supple hands and delicate fingers fly over the key-board; then I *knew* that her large eyes were fixed upon me. For a moment or two I sustained her glance; then I felt that I was subdued by her, and I was compelled to look away to be rid of a sensation of dizziness that was growing upon me. Gradually I conquered this feeling, however, and at last could support without flinching the strange vividness of her gaze.

"It grows late," she said. She closed the piano and quitted the room. As she passed out through the wide doorway, the thought came to me that I had seen Mdlle. d'Hérion before; that her face was not entirely unknown to me. I turned to William Forde. He was sitting rigidly, with tightly-clenched hands, on the ottoman close to the piano. He was so abstracted as to appear almost in a state of torpor. I touched him; he started up.

"You, is it?" he exclaimed hurriedly. "I thought—" then he paused, staring into my face. "Yes. *You* have felt it too. I am sure of it. The influence of Mdlle. d'Hérion."

At this moment she reëntered the room.

"I have returned to say good night only." She extended her hand; as she withdrew it from mine, I felt that a crumpled scrap of paper remained in my palm. I closed my fingers upon it.

The household retired to rest at the early hour usual in the country. When I had gained my bedroom, I examined Mdlle. d'Hérion's paper. I read these words:

"At half-past eleven be in the walk beneath the terrace."

As I have said, the terrace was in front of the house, and bordered by a balustrade. Then the lawn sloped down steeply, ending in another walk parallel to the terrace, but so much below it that it could be seen from none of the windows. The moon was shining at the back of the house, throwing deep shadows across this lower walk. I had waited but a few minutes, when I saw Mdlle. d'Hérion approaching.

"You have recognised me?" she said abruptly.

"I have seen you before. When, where,—I cannot at present remember."

"I will tell you, because I know that in time you will remember; and it is better that I should tell you myself. There is an alloy in my frankness," she said, with a rather unpleasant laugh. "I only tell you because I see that in time you will of yourself know all." She waited a minute, and then spoke with great rapidity. "Two years ago you were in Paris. Is that so?"

"Yes."

"One evening in February you went to the Ambigu, with M. D—. He is well known at the theatre. He took you behind the curtain. He introduced you to certain of the performers, his friends. You entered the *foyer* of the actors. I was there. Do you recollect now?"

But I could not carry back my thoughts by this sudden process. The forgotten past can only return to the memory slowly, gradually. I hesitated.

"You *shall* recollect," she said commandingly. "Now think. There was a *féerie* playing at the Ambigu—*La Coquille de Noix et la Fée Berlinguette*. The night of your visit an accident occurred; a *danseuse*, named Arthémise, fell from a considerable height, twisting her wrists and spraining her right foot, painfully, if not severely. A crowd gathered round her in the *foyer*. A woman looked over your shoulder, and spoke to you in *English*. Do you remember that?"

"I do. Yet not distinctly."

"A woman playing a part in the *féerie*. A woman, dark, her long black hair twisted about with cords of pearls, who held in her hand a javelin, a tiger-skin hanging from her shoulders, with spangles upon her stage tunic, and gold rings upon her wrists and ankles."

"It was you, Mdlle. d'Hérion!"

"Yes, it was I. Mdlle. Lucrece, according to the *affiche*. You remember."

"I do. And now—"

"Why am I here? How is it I am called Madeleine d'Hérion? Speaking English, teaching French? Respectable—don't fear to say the word. I am not easily frightened at words." And she laughed again harshly; and her eyes, deep in shadow though they were, seemed to gleam and glitter, emitting light from within, as a diamond is said to do in a darkened room. "Why am I resident in an English gentleman's family, intrusted with the education of two young English *demoiselles*? Don't start. Whatever I may have been," she said, with seriousness, "I know how to do my duty to them; and have done it. How do I know your language so well? I was born at Pondicherry, of French parents. Perhaps there is a taint of Asiatic blood in my veins—black blood. Do you think I am much grieved at that? A mere child, I was taken to Calcutta. We made many friends there. English friends. Not the best class of English, you understand; and I learnt your language. Then I went to Paris with my parents; buried them, and was alone, to beg for my living, or to dance, or sing, or play for it. Do you fancy there were many to care much what I did? Do you think there was any one living soul to sorrow for me when I stepped on the boards of the Ambigu Comique in my spangled tunic, and buskins, and pearl-cords round my head, to play the Queen of the Amazons in *La Coquille de Noix*, and dance, sing *couplets*, stand in front of revolving wheels, and do all I could to wring applause from the audience, and earn my salary? You are not yet satisfied? There is yet a gulf between *there* and *here* which your intelligence cannot bridge?"

"Why are you here?"

"You English *will* have French governesses, a pure Parisian accent. Is not *that* what you insist upon? A letter of introduction from a French countess—say a forged letter, if you like—to a London agent, and a situation was secured even for *me*," she said mockingly.

"Still, why are you here?" I knew that she had yet more to tell.

She paused a moment. Then she climbed up the steep slope and looked in the direction of the house.

"There is one coming now who will tell you."

William Forde appeared at the end of the walk. He was moving slowly with evident effort, almost as though he were somnambule.

"Guillaume," she said, in measured tones, her eyes fixed upon his face, "monsieur asks why I am here. Tell him."

"You insist, Madeleine?" he inquired hoarsely.

"I do insist."

Then he answered, but without turning to me, still addressing the French woman,

"*Because, Madeleine, you are my wife!*"

I started back.

"Are you satisfied?" she asked, with an air of calm triumph.

"He is mad."

"No, he is not mad."

"Why is this told to me?" I cried angrily. "Why am I made a sharer in this wretched secret?"

"Tell him, Guillaume," said the governess.

"Because you must help us." He spoke as one in a mesmeric trance, as though all power of will were lost to him.

"Reveal this secret to your father?"

"No, no, not that. Not that, in Heaven's name. It would kill him."

"What then?"

"Aid me in diverting my father from this plan of marrying me to Catherine Vere."

And, apparently in obedience to a signal from the French woman, he left us.

"It is I who brought you here to do this," she said; "I, through Guillaume. You must aid him."

"If I refuse?"

"You will not. It is for him I speak, not for myself. He is a mere instrument in the hands of others. He can be bent to what shape you will. Do not interfere, and he will obey his father's commands. Married already, he will marry again. That is bigamy, is it not?—felony, is it not, by your English law? It will ruin *him*, it will ruin *her*." And her voice took a tone of fierceness. "Will it unmarry me? Will it touch me in any way? You know as well as I do that it will not."

I was thankful to be in my room again, with locked doors and barred window-shutters sundering me from the strange eyes of Mdlle. d'Hérion. William Forde's wife? Was it possible—commonly possible?

What strange things were these I had heard, rising like ghosts in old Chewton Manor House? It was hard to go to sleep for thinking of them, revolving them in my mind in a tiresome phantasmic whirl. It was harder still to go to sleep and not dream of the strange eyes of Mdlle. d'Hérion, William Forde's wife, piercing the darkness of night like stars drilling through a cloud, and dazzling and bewildering me till I fell back rather in a trance than in sleep.

II.

I slept until a later hour than usual. I was disturbed by the sound of voices. The library adjoined my room, and a door, kept constantly locked, led from one apartment into the other. A conversation between two persons was being held in the library, and I could not help over-hearing.

"Indeed, William,"—Mr. Forde was the speaker, in calm yet touching tones,—“indeed, William, I must ask you to consider *me* a little more than you are inclined to do. You know how anxiously I have looked forward to this marriage. I grow old. It is not much I ask—that you will let me see you happy with Catherine as your wife before I leave you for ever.”

"Still, delay seems unavoidable," I could hear William urge hesitatingly.

"I see no reason for it. In justice to Catherine and yourself, to her father and to me, these continual postponements and procrastinations are greatly to be deprecated. You love and are loved. The union promises in every way happiness to all concerned. Why do you shrink from it?"

William made no reply. The old man resumed, in warmer words,

"You have no right to trifle with the love of Catherine, a love that any man might well be proud to win and wear. More: you *shall not* trifle with that love. If you will not go to Hurst Rectory to ask that a day may be appointed for your marriage, I will go on your behalf. I will be a party to this weakness and vacillation no longer."

"I will go, father—to-day even, if you desire it," William said in a low voice.

"And fix a day for the marriage? Thank you, William. Forgive me if I have seemed too hasty in speaking on this subject."

During the morning I saw nothing of the Frenchwoman. She was occupied in the schoolroom with her pupils.

Soon after breakfast, I found the horses brought to the side-entrance.

"Where are we going?" I asked of William, as we trotted down the lime-tree avenue of the park.

"To Hurst Rectory. Do you know what for?"

"Yes," I said; "to fix a day for your marriage with Catherine Vere."

He so started as I spoke, that, pulling suddenly at the bridle, his horse reared up. He turned a scared face towards me.

"Who told you this? Did *she*—Madeleine?"

"No. I was in my bedroom when you spoke to your father this morning. I could not help hearing what you said." He was silent for some minutes.

"I think I am going mad," he exclaimed at last.

"You are about to ask Miss Vere to marry you. *Can* you do this?"

"Can I help doing so? Do you not see how I am compelled to act thus; how I am urged on by influences I cannot escape—influences which you also have felt?"

"William, it seems to me you are about to commit a crime. Do not ask me to join you in it. Listen now, and answer truthfully. Do you love Madeleine?"

He stopped for a few moments. I repeated the inquiry. There was such a senseless expression upon his face that I thought he had not comprehended my words.

"Indeed I know not," he answered at last. "In her presence I am her slave; out of it—" he looked round cautiously, as though fearful of other listeners, then continued in a fierce whisper, "out of it, *I hate her.*"

"She is your wife?" A suspicion occurred to me that she had spoken falsely, or, rather, had compelled him to misrepresent her position.

"You heard what was said last night." He relapsed from his excited manner into a state of lethargic indifference.

"Where did you meet her first?"

"In Paris, a year ago. She was painting then in the *atelier* of M. de Lys. Her eyes fell upon me, and seemed to scorch through me to my very soul. I felt that I was hers thenceforth absolutely—her victim—her slave, as I have said."

"And she came here with your aid and at your request? You introduced her to your father's house as governess to your sisters?"

"No, indeed not," he said with some earnestness. "What has been done since,—what folly, what madness, what wickedness,—has been apart from any consciousness of mine. I have been bound hand and foot. I could move, speak, act, only as she bid me. I am under a spell."

"And she tells you to marry Catherine Vere?"

"She laughs at me; mocks me, sometimes, in this; now urges me on, now draws me back. She hates Catherine Vere. She would do all in her power to injure her."

In the midst of these extraordinary circumstances, what was *I* to do?

"You love Catherine?"

"Away from *her*, I love Catharine. I shall never cease to love her with all my soul. Near *her*, my heart is dead, I think."

I conversed with Mr. Vere, a pleasant old country clergyman, while William strolled with Catherine in the garden. She looked very beautiful in her simple morning-dress, the rich auburn hair thrown back from her face, and setting in a glorious nimbus round her head. Surely, he loves her tenderly, I thought, surveying them from the window. Surely, those superb hazel eyes are telling him over and over again that his love is returned.

He was strangely excited as we rode back to Chewton Manor. He appeared quite radiant with happiness.

"The day is fixed," he cried; "the 13th of next month."

"And Madeleine d'Hérion?"

He turned pale and shuddered, placing his hand upon his heart as though in pain.

"I had forgotten her quite!" he said; and he spoke not another word during our ride home. Arrived, I noticed that he staggered as he dismounted. I succeeded in catching him in my arms as he fell back fainting.

"Don't tell my father of this," he said, as soon as he recovered a little; "it will alarm him too much."

We were the same small quiet party at dinner. William still very silent, with rather a look of suffering in his eyes; old Mr. Forde gayer and happier in manner. He evidently knew that the date had been appointed for the marriage of his son and Catherine Vere.

I met the French woman on the terrace after dinner.

"I know where you have been, and what has happened," she said.

"Remember always that I gave you warning. If *he* has no pity,—if *you* are heedless as to the fate of this Miss Vere, why should I trouble myself?"

"I thank you, mademoiselle," I said. "I have not forgotten what passed last night. I am heedful as to the fate of Catherine Vere, be sure of that."

"You will stand by and assist, while your friend commits a felony?"

"Suppose there is no question of felony; suppose there has been no marriage between William Forde and Mademoiselle d'Hérion?"

I must confess I had slender ground on which to rest this suggestion; still it seemed a test worth trying.

She turned upon me her large eyes, an angry look in them, but she spoke calmly, with compressed lips.

"You are welcome to suppose so, if you will;" and she passed on.

A day or two went by thus. There was no new incident of importance.

"I am afraid you will be very dull here," Mr. Forde would often say. "We are so quiet."

Yes; quiet as the stretched parchment of a drum, which needs but a few slight strokes to reverberate noisily enough. Quiet, indeed; with a mine beneath the house ready for springing at any moment.

It was the last night of my visit. I was to journey back to town on the morrow. A promise had been extorted from me, however, that I would re-visit Chewton Manor House in the following month, when it was proposed to celebrate the marriage of William and Catherine. This marriage was now a constant topic of conversation, in which Madeleine d'Hérion even joined. Amongst other things, her advice had been asked and given on the great question concerning the dresses to be worn on the occasion by Blanche and Ada, who were to be two of the bridesmaids. Very calmly the governess discussed the arrangements. By no act or word or glance did she betray her extraordinary position. William, on the other hand, wore a jaded haggard look most painful to see. In vain I endeavoured to rouse him to some course of action which would withdraw him from the influence of the French woman, and test to the utmost the truth of the story with which I had been made acquainted that night on the lower terrace-walk. I could do nothing with him.

"Be satisfied," was always his answer. "Have no fear for Catherine; this marriage will not take place."

I was saying good night to him.

"Heavens, William! how your hand burns!"

"Does it?" he asked. "Perhaps I *am* a little feverish. I am not very well, I know. I fainted twice in the park to-day; but don't tell that to my father. Good night. I will try and sleep to-night, and I shall be better to-morrow, I dare say. And yet, truth to tell, I am sometimes afraid to go to sleep. If you but knew the fearful dreams that torment me! Good night."

He spoke with a composed earnestness that had been for some time a stranger to him.

I retired to my own room. I had an hour or two's writing to do before going to bed, and I sat down to my work. The household had retired for the night, and all was very still indeed. The room occupied by William Forde was immediately over mine. For some time, I had heard no sound of his moving. The noise of my own pen, and the occasional rustle of the wind in the copse, alone broke the death-like silence that prevailed.

Suddenly a loud and piercing scream ran through the house; a shriek of agony rather, that seemed scarcely human, but was more like the yell of some tortured animal. I started up trembling. What did it mean? A dreadful presentiment of evil oppressed me. The noise seemed to come from the upper portion of the house. Heaven! was it possible? From the bed-chamber of William Forde? I seized the candle and rushed from my room. Close outside was a staircase—an inferior staircase; the best was facing the entrance-hall, leading up to the first floor. I mounted with nervous haste, and soon found myself at the door of William Forde's room.

I listened; I could hear nothing; except, that in some of the more distant apartments down a corridor to the right there were sounds as of persons stirring, disturbed by that fearful cry. I grasped the door-handle—a turn of it, and I was in the room. My heart beat with a sickening violence. I advanced one step, when a draught from the open window blew out my candle.

At first I could see nothing save the square shape of the window, for the night is always less dark than the shadows in a room. Could I hear any thing further than my own painfully difficult respiration? Yes; a moaning sound; a hoarse panting, that seemed to come from the bed. What could this mean? Yes, I could see the bed at last; a high, large, heavily-draped, old-fashioned bed. I stood close to the side of it. I put out my hand, and found I touched the curtains. I moved my hand to and fro; the curtains were drawn closely round the bed. I moved my hand, seeking where these opened. Then, then—could I be mistaken? there was some one within holding the curtains tightly together, resisting my efforts. I moved round to the foot of the bed; *the some one within moved also*, preventing me with trembling hands; and still the same moaning, the same dreadful, hoarse, panting sound. What did this mean? Great God! what horrible mystery was this? I staggered from the room.

"A light! a light!" I cried, in a paroxysm of terror. I saw a figure with a lamp advancing along the corridor.

"What has happened?" asked old Mr. Forde, with a deathly-white face. I pointed to William's room, for, indeed, all voice had left me. My tongue seemed paralysed.

We entered. With trembling eagerness Mr. Forde tore open the curtains. There was no longer any resistance.

"O God!" he cried, "have pity. Speak, William, speak."

I quitted the room. I dared not intrude upon the holy grief of the poor old man. He was bending over the body of his son, stretched out, stone-dead upon the bed. Dead William Forde, very white, and the colour gone from his lips, and from his eyes, as it seemed, gazing into them through their half-open lids; a slight foam round his mouth, his hair dishevelled and dank, his fingers clutching firmly the bed-clothes; and nothing to show that he had met his death by other than causes purely natural.

Outside the room door I found Madeleine d'Hérion.

"Be content with your work," I said to her; "the spell is over now for ever. William Forde is dead."

She shook like one palsied; the light dimmed in her black eyes, and there were the lines of tears on her face.

"Spare me," she cried in a moved, broken voice, "I never dreamt of this. Do me that justice. I loved him."

"And now—"

"I know what you mean. I will go—at once—any where. What does it matter? Who will care?"

"And the story told in the lower walk—?"

"Shall never pass my lips. Trust me in that, and forgive me, if you can; and, farewell, we shall never meet again. You shall never see me, even hear of me, again. Farewell!

But few words need be added.

I have often pondered over my visit to Chewton Manor House. I have often tried to discover whether any unhealthiness of mind on my part at the time lent colour, or exaggeration, or falsity to my view of the events that occurred there. Yet I have never brought myself entirely to the belief that such was the case. In regard to certain of the incidents of the story, however, I can satisfy myself with no reasonable explanation. I can hardly hope, therefore, while narrating, with all the truthfulness and simplicity possible, to be entirely intelligible to the reader, seeing that I fail in being so even to myself. A mystery connects itself with the fate of William Forde—a mystery no effort of mine can wholly elucidate.

It was my painful task to communicate to Miss Vere the death of her affianced husband. Of her ineffable sorrow it is not for me to speak; and years after, when the dead man's friend, looking into her beautiful eyes, hoped to read there forgetfulness of the past and some response to a great emotion troubling his own heart, he knew speedily how futile, how foolish was that hope; he could see that her sorrow still lived, that her love was in the grave of poor spell-bound William Forde.

Of the Mountebank Family.

IF men might claim respect at the hands of their fellows on the ground of the purity and simplicity of their rule of life, the not highly-regarded mountebank family might demand as much veneration as a dean and chapter. They probably would not obtain what they demanded; and yet it is certain that no member of that family who aspires to hold high rank, and occupy a glorious position in the annals of his house, is able to achieve his object unless he live under a discipline of temperance, soberness, and other virtuous regulation, which would have disgusted a housefull of Trappists, and have wearied out any given number of pages and squires in training for the honours of knighthood.

A vocation which, on the part of him professing it, requires in its various branches steadiness of eye, or of hand, or of foot, power of calculation, cool courage, and imperturbable nerve, should lend a dignity to the professor, which no one, however, is prepared to recognise in the unlucky brotherhood. The reason, perhaps, is to be found in the circumstance that many of the brethren, disregarding the rule by which alone they can achieve greatness, fall into practices which disqualify them for their vocation. Some few are faithful to the rule by which glory is accomplished, and these become "artists" in their peculiar ways. Léotard could not fling himself into the empty air, nor Blondin dance gracefully through life on a two-inch rope, if they did not observe an abstinence from some things and a regularity in others, which I very much hope may be as strictly observed by the bench of bishops.

They were more honourably accounted of, I think, in the olden days. At the court of King Menelaus it was the young gentlemen of that jolly household who used to receive illustrious visitors by dancing on their heads. What games and tricks with balls were invented by the Princess Nausicaa, that most frolicsome of lady-mountebanks, are among the memories of your pleasant travelling through the Odyssey. Perhaps of all royal mountebanks there was not one more accomplished than the Norwegian King Olaf. He could climb poles with his heaviest armour on; danced so lightly as to trip safely over the oars of his galley, without embarrassing the rowers as they pulled swiftly over the waters; and could keep half a dozen javelins in the air, tossing them from one hand and catching them in the other, with a dexterity and grace that were never surpassed by Ramo Samee in front of the glass curtain at the Coburg Theatre. Such were some of the old practitioners, but who was the founder of the family?

That portion of the brotherhood of serious strollers, who, in the words of their rural programme, perform "extraordinary amazing wonders of a miraculous kind," are the sons of a very ancient and a very pious family.

I take their progenitor to have been that famous Milo of Crotona whose story is at once our example and our admonition.

That remarkable young gentleman, when at the greatest of his strength, was worth any manager's money. The athlete who had trained himself so gradually that at last he could carry a bull four years old on his shoulders thrice round the circus, then, setting it on its legs, knock it down with a blow, and finally, cook and eat it, all in one afternoon,—such a performance must have produced a “sensation” in any country. At the Crystal Palace he would be worth his weight in gold to the directors, who would doubtless accede to his own terms, and undertake to find him in bullocks. At the public games, after being several times in succession the successful competitor, he became at last the sole performer in his own line—feats of enormous strength and graceful dexterity. All the country round flocked to behold him, and wives and daughters enclosed at home were mad to break prison and take front places. As for the other accomplished athlete of his day whom he had surpassed, they loved him exceedingly, much as eminent tragedians who have Brutus-wigged it in Hamlet, love Fechter.

Let us hope that all of the “saltimbanque” family who recognise a founder in Milo will remember that he was a gentleman. He was modest, reserved, and temperate, as became a pupil of Pythagoras; and his terrible arm or his broad shoulder was always at the service of the college and the collegians. His crowning performance in public was the pulling up of stout trees by the roots. He would have de-arborised Cremorne in a couple of exhibitions, and ruined the proprietor by his very success. In which last feat he has his followers or imitators in this very day.

The admonition conveyed by the story of Milo is this. When age came and muscular power declined, he still addressed himself to the feat of eradicating trees; but, failing more than once, the people hissed him. The stout-hearted old fellow persevered nevertheless, and we all know how the father of mountebanks perished. In essaying to tear an oak in two, he got caught in the cleft, and tradition says he was devoured by the wild beasts in the vicinity, as he struggled in the trap he had himself constructed. These “beasts” were the critics, who, in those rude times, were merciless against veterans who tarried “superfluous on the stage.” Their descendants were hardly more compassionate to Betterton, when, at near four-score, he thrust his foot, swollen with gout, into a bucket of water, in order so to reduce the limb in size as to be able to force it into a buskin. He succeeded, played Melanthus, and died immediately after of suppressed gout. The critics were civil, but wondered what else he could have expected; and so died the venerable father of mountebanks, and the father of the English stage created at the Restoration.

Every class in life has its patron saint. The tailors, appropriately enough, have no less than nine St. Williams, to whom they may address themselves in compound appeal. The rope-dancers and saltatores generally have but one, St. Vitus, in whose cathedral at Prague I have seen

a group of poor and pretty girls, from various "shows" in the fair there, on their knees, praying the saint, I suppose, to help them to go "tumbling" decently through life. "*Amen.*" I hope they were helped; but I fear that St. Vitus has as little care for *ballerinas* as Veronica has for milliners. The true patron, not yet a saint, of the brother- and sisterhood of mountebanks is the Belgian Gundramnus. This highly successful itinerant rider, rope-dancer, actor, and manager, possessed a couple of bears whom he ruled with greater comfort and propriety than any company of "ladies and gentlemen" who had been indebted to him for their weekly salaries. These bears were a treasure to Gundramnus, for they were equal to any task demanded of them; and they built up a fortune for their master, and never struck for an increase of *honorarium*. Gundramnus had one day taken them out for an airing. They were as refined bears in their way as the one immortalised in Goldsmith's comedy, which never danced but to the genteelst of tunes—"Water parted," or the minuet in *Ariadne*. In the course of the promenade of the millionaire mountebank and his brace of friends, they happened to traverse a cemetery, upon a tombstone in which one of the bears, being a bear of delicate health, sat down to rest himself awhile. His companion and Gundramnus stood by awaiting his pleasure, and a crowd of loiterers gathered around, expressing their admiration or their sympathy. Meanwhile, the invalid appeared to grow weaker instead of refreshed; and in a few minutes, after extending a paw to Gundramnus, and faintly nodding an adieu to his brother, sank down and died. The bear-owner expressed his astonishment that a beast who could dance on the tight and slack rope like a fairy, throw a "summerset" as deftly as harlequin, and leap over a five-barred gate, with double fence and stakes beyond, like a fawn, should not be able to sit upright on a tombstone, but must needs sink down like a sick girl.

"Sick girl here, and sick girl there!" said the sexton. "The beast is dead; and no wonder. He has been sitting on the very name of St. Rumbold of Mechlin; and a saint who, when living, couldn't abide bears, is not likely, when dead, to endure rudeness from one without showing his opinion upon it."

Gundramnus accepted the conclusion that his deceased friend had endured death at the hands of the saint on account of his unintentional discourtesy. He left the bear as a peace-offering to the church authorities, and he, with the other survivor, paced homeward in a very meditative mood indeed. They wandered away into the Liegeois, and went into retirement. Neither of them thought for a moment of public performances, and each seemed to have suffered some sad change. One evening, as the wealthy ex-mime was solemnly sipping his Walportzheimer,--solemnly sipping a good deal of it,--and Bruno was at the opposite side of the table stealthily nimbing the sponge-cakes, and sighing, after swallowing them, as if the world was a wicked world, full of delusion, and no more sponge-cakes,--Gundramnus the mountebank slowly

raised his head, and remarked, in very tolerable Latin, "*Locus periculosus est ad hospitalitatem exercendum.*"

The bear looked hurt, and a little disgusted. He expected a reproof, and assumed an air of preparation to despise it.

"And therefore," resumed Gundramnus, dropping from Latin into the Walloon dialect, which Bruno naturally comprehended well enough, "we will found a church in this very district. We have wherewith and to spare."

The bear entertained the same opinion, manifested intense delight, and expressed his readiness, after his fashion, to carry all the stone his master might require for the edifice. Now, if there be any story credited in the Liegeois, and among Belgian mountebanks not altogether ignorant of the lore and the literature of their vocation, it is this of Bruno and Gundramnus. I believe it myself. The good folks of the time saw the fact; and the learned folks of the time set it down in their chronicles; and I, who am neither good nor learned, implicitly believe the circumstance and the record of it. Gundramnus, according to his word, laid the foundations of the church, every stone in which was actually brought by the bear, and so was every florin in the mountebank's purse; the name of whose owner is as music in the ear of every *Saute-ruisseau* in the Netherlands, who, beginning life with kicks and spangles, hopes to end it with a heavy purse and a huge bear, like their founder Gundramnus.

When the modest Alexandre Dumas was about to be examined as a witness on a trial at Rouen, which involved a question of life and death, he was asked his name and profession. After giving his name, that meek gentleman added, that were he not in the birth-place of the great Corneille, he would have called himself a dramatist. "Sir," said the finely ironical president, "do not hesitate; there are degrees in every thing." So there is among that peculiar class of mountebanks called fire-eaters. What a difference in degree, for instance, between the exhibitors who pretended to draw an endless quantity of burning tow from their mouths, or whose tongues could no more be blistered by licking red-hot pokers than by coolly lying! How great the difference between these tricksters and Chabot the fire-king, who walked into an oven with a half-quarter of ox, and did not leave it till the beef was thoroughly baked! St. Catherine must have looked closely to the safety of the most daring of her sons, the whole race of whom is under the protection of the saint who suffered at Alexandria. The early fire-eaters at fairs assumed a certain sacredness of character by recognising this Egyptian Lucretia for their mistress. In proof of this, they alluded to the figure of the wheels which were to have been the instruments of her death, and which were impressed, they said, on their body. As they apparently handled fire with impunity, their assertions were accepted without question, and St. Catherine was the most popular of festival-queens throughout England. The poor players who pass from one country town to

another, and to whom life is no playful matter, have some claim, I think, on the favour of the Alexandrian lady. The first sacred play ever acted in an English provincial town had St. Catherine for a heroine, and the theatre wherein it was played was erected seven hundred years ago at Dunstable, the birth-place of Sylvester Daggerwood! Is not *that* a coincidence?

Nearly all fairs, those temporary homes of the mountebank, were founded for the double purpose of honouring some saint and improving the commerce of the locality. They have abounded in every quarter of the world, but not in every country of each quarter; and it is a singular fact, that in countries like Spain and Portugal, where saints have been held in more honour than elsewhere, fairs, in our sense of the word, have been altogether unknown. I am aware of only one instance of a fair being established for the express purpose of insulting a community. Perhaps this especial fair was in this case perverted from its original purpose. I allude to the "foires aux jambons" in France. They were held on the Tuesday in Passion Week, and the great staple consisted of hams, sausages, and such-like articles, the scent alone of which was a provoking luxury to the visitors, who, as orthodox churchmen, must necessarily refrain from tasting till Easter. The dainties thus chosen for the Easter time were so selected expressly to manifest public contempt for the Jews. The spirit was precisely like that which influenced the Scottish Presbyterian ministers of the last century, who deemed actors, indeed, to be children of Satan, but who nevertheless would go to the play in Passion Week, simply to exhibit their contempt for popish observances! This last act was exactly the reverse of that of the French mountebanks mentioned by Goujet, in his *Bibliothèque Française*, and who, in 1649, used to exhibit "la Passion de Notre Seigneur en vers burlesques"!

It is on record that the House of Commons once suddenly terminated an early session in order to rush down to Covent Garden to see Master Betty play one of his principal characters. It is also said that the Lords, at a very critical moment in the trial of Queen Caroline, left the chancellor alone, while they assembled in the front of the house, with smoked glasses to their eyes, to view a rather shabby sample of an eclipse. There was something of this versatility of character in the Roman people, if not in the Roman senate. What a strange spectacle it would be if a Hay-market audience, for instance, thickly packed to witness a new five-act comedy, were to bethink themselves, just as the curtain was rising, that Léotard, that prince of the mountebank blood-royal, was just then commencing his audacious feats at the Alhambra; fancy them acting on the thought, pouring out of the house, flying by various streets, and ultimately filling all the seats left vacant in that gorgeous temple of saltimbanquism in Leicester Square! What a compliment to the author of the original comedy from the French! Just such a compliment, however, was once paid to Terence, that Carthaginian gentleman who used to com-

pose original Latin comedies from the Greek. The house was "crammed;" the audience were silently awaiting the first scene of the new comedy, the "Hecyra," or the "Mother-in-Law," when the general ear was struck by the announcing trumpets of a company of Blondins and Léotards of that day. The temptation was irresistible. The piece had commenced; but what was the story of the loves of those two girls, Bacchis and Philumena, to the sight of the champion of wrestlers and the pink of rope-dancers? The mountebanks carried the day, and the ladies were the loudest in screaming and laughing as they struggled out of the theatre, and raced hotly for seats round the circus and the saw-dust. How excusably bitter the despised dramatist is in recording the mountebank triumph over the legitimate drama! How he dwells on the "crime" and the "calamity" by which he suffered! How he stigmatises a people so stupid, who preferred looking at a tumbler on a rope to witnessing the performance of his comedy!

"Ita populus studio stupidus in funambulo
Animum occuparat."

Those were rude audiences, and they had not improved in the days of Horace. Mr. Charles Kean is said to have but little appreciated the custom at the Standard Theatre of whistling him before the curtain at the conclusion of a tragedy. What would he have said had the audience stopped *Louis XI.* in the best scene of the third act, and insisted on having a dancing-bear, or a set-to between two celebrated pugilists, instead of the tragedy? This, however, weary audiences did not scruple to do in Horace's play-going time. In the very middle of the play they would roar out for the bear or the gladiators,—exhibitions more to their taste.

"Media inter carmina poscunt
Aut ursum aut pugiles; his nam plebecula gaudet."

The most renowned of our funambulists of the olden time was undoubtedly, Jacob Hall. His symmetry, his elegance, his strength, and his courage, rendered him the dear delight of the fashionable ladies of King Charles the Second's period generally, and of Lady Castlemaine, who patronised excellence and pensioned Jacob, in particular. In those days ladies of rank vied with each other for the honour of having Kynaston, the boy-actor of female characters, in their carriage with them in Hyde Park. The same ladies welcomed Jacob at their houses. There was a strong desire to see him in private, out of his plumes and spangles. "Have you ever had any mischief by falls?" asked Pepys of the rope-dancer. "Ay, many," said Jacob, "but never to the breaking of a limb." So popular was this Adonis-and-Hercules of acrobats, that after the conclusion of Bartholomew Fair, where he had enchanted all beholders, and paid the king's trumpeter his usual fee for permission to sound an *alarum* in Smithfield, he would set up his ropes in Charing Cross or Lincoln's-Inn Fields, where he attracted such enthusiastic crowds, that the public circulation was checked, and the magistracy had to put some restraint upon the graceful and powerful mountebank.

Since Hall's time no rope-dancer has been so widely known as Blondin. His coolness and presence of mind are well illustrated in his remark to the nervous man whom he was carrying on his shoulders, as he traversed the cord stretched near the Niagara Falls. "I must request you to sit quiet," said Blondin, "or I shall be obliged to *put you down*." The idea of being lifted from those shoulders, and left on the rope to shift for himself, kept the terrified rider in obedience to him by whom he was carried; and so they reached the desired goal in safety.

When Blondin's agent appeared before the directors of the Crystal Palace, to "negotiate an engagement," one cautious member of that body ventured to remark, in a sense adverse to the engagement, "But, suppose he were to fall?" "Do what?" asked the agent, to whom the remark was especially addressed. "Fall," repeated the director. "Fall!" reëchoed the agent, with a most natural air of surprise,—*"where from?"* "Where from?" reiterated the other, *"why, from the rope!"* "Blondin fall from the rope!" said the agent, with a calm solemnity; *"why, he can't!"* and that being the case, the terms of engagement were duly concluded.

Between Hall and Blondin, the artists, however distinguished in their way, were of inferior merit; and yet to dance on that frail vantage-ground of rope in a pair of buckets, to pass along it with a child tied to each leg and a third seated on the neck, to change costumes upon it, in the full tide of frantic saltation, like the once renowned "Lady Mary" of Bartholomew; to play such gracefully fantastic tricks upon it as Wilson was wont to do; or to rush upward upon it from stage to gallery, and down again, from gallery to stage, wheeling a barrow the whole way, after the manner set by the inimitable Madame Saqui,—are not matters easy of accomplishment. Wilson, too, was accustomed to perform this last feat. I once happened to be a fellow-traveller with him, on which occasion he told me that it was only perilous to him when he attempted it in the Dublin Theatre. On reaching the gallery, the spectators there used to receive him with open arms, seize him, and refuse to let him go till he had partaken of whisky offered him from a dozen different quarters. The small quantity he took affected the calm steadiness of his eye in the descent, and it became necessary to provide means to rescue him from the dangerous kindness of the spectators in the gallery.

More terrific ascents, however, than any of the above were those out-of-door performances which Madame Saqui undertook when she was approaching seventy years of age. These occurred on public festival occasions during the last years of the Bourbon *régime* in Paris. The locality was the Place de la Concorde, the time night, and the accompaniment up and down that steep and narrow path of rope was the fire of a hundred thousand rockets, of which the intrepid old woman seemed to be the centre.

The greatest of these human artists, however, have been excelled in the practice of their own art by the brutes. The serpents who used to

dance in London on slight silken ropes were merely "pretty." The grand master of mountebanks, below man, is unquestionably the elephant. In old pagan theatres the most attractive performers were the elephants who climbed ropes, "hand over hand" fashion, and then descended them head foremost. By what a mass of spectators would "Astley's" be occupied were an announcement made of a race in the circle by a brace of elephants mounted by Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli! Something like such a spectacle was more than once seen in Rome, as all know who are familiar with Suetonius's life of Nero. There, indeed, the rope-dancing elephants were more attractive than the races of the same family. You remember how Juvenal asserts of the Greeks who inhabited Rome in his day, that each man was a universal genius in his way—grammarian, rhetorician, painter, geometrician, teacher of gymnastics, augur, *rope-dancer*, medical man, and conjuror. But if this Greek *schœnobates*, or rope-dancer, was so highly accomplished, what is to be said for the elephants of the Roman circus who could not only dance cleverly on the rope, but could speak or write Greek! They were accustomed to write short Greek sentences, and distribute them among the spectators; and they were really honest conscientious elephants, for Pliny tells us of one who was willing, but rather slow to learn the tricks by which he was to excite admiration on and off the rope. The poor fellow was roughly handled for his dulness, but for perseverance and good-will he was never excelled by the most patient biped mountebank of them all, as may be seen in the circumstance of this obese pupil getting up at night and practising in the straw the lessons which his instructors had essayed to teach him in the day-time! With such application, the most wonderful feats were accomplished; and perhaps the most wonderful of all was the grand performance on several ropes of four elephants gravely bearing a delicate lady of their tribe in a litter, and exhibiting exquisite sympathy and readiness to assist her, as she exclaimed, or pretended to exclaim, *Juno Lucina, fer opem!* This was even better, as a work of high art in the rope department, than the feat of a French mountebank in the thirteenth century, who, in honour of the marriage of the French king's brother, cantered up and down a *corde tendue* on a high-mettled horse belonging to the Franconi of the day. When I saw Blondin, with his head in a sack, trip blindfold along the rope in the transept of the Crystal Palace, I could not help thinking, clever as he was, that he was hardly equal to his countryman of six hundred years ago, and that bold fellows had existed before him, the Agamemnon of rope-dancing men.

Off their own ground, it is marvellous to behold what very small men these mountebanks are. I will take as an instance the most accomplished rider of his, perhaps of any, time, namely, Ducrow. Some years ago, when the graceful and daring George Anthony was keeping his circus in York, he would occasionally come out for a run with the York and Ainsty, or with Lord Harewood's hounds. I have seen him

ride with both packs, and on every occasion he was the least graceful and daring rider in the field. While the late Earl of Harewood, then Mr. Lascelles, would charge over a rasping fence, with both feet dropped from his stirrups, and without interrupting any conversation in which he might have been engaged, Ducrow would bide his time, wait till the fence was "topped" by two or three horses charging over it, and then take the diminished height by a safe and quiet "jump," in which he was often followed by one individual with whom I have been most intimately acquainted for many years, and who felt wonderfully encouraged by the example afforded him by the most astounding circus equestrian of his age. In the saw-dust Ducrow was supreme; but bowling over ridge and furrow, or flying at a fence, George Anthony, like the unambitious gentleman who followed him, was a very prudent and unpresuming man.

As a teacher and trainer of young riders and rope-dancers Ducrow was unequalled; but his severity was of something the same complexion. On one occasion, that nonpareil of true dramatic clowns, Mr. Joseph Grimaldi, was present while George Anthony was giving a lesson to various professional pupils or apprentices taken from some metropolitan workhouse. They were dull and timid, and their great master dismissed them from the circus with every bone of their body aching under the blows of his swift and vindictive cane. As they were limping away, he turned in an apologetical fashion to the good old clown, and remarked, "You see, Mr. Grimaldi, it is absolutely necessary to make an impression." "I don't object to the impression," said Joe, in his quietly humorous way; "what I object to is, the whacks (*var*) being so hard."

It will probably not be disputed that the mountebank family has been ennobled by the illustrious men who have taken up the vocation as amateurs; by the learned men who have spoken of such vocation with respect; or by the industrious men who lived long enough by the practice of it to build up fortunes for their less active heirs to enjoy. Of the first class, Caligula is undoubtedly the chief. What a pretty compliment he paid to the gentlemen of the circus when he raised his horse to the dignity of consul! Then, again, Caligula was himself a proficient in all mountebank practices. There was scarcely any one of them which he did not attempt, and but few in which he did not succeed. He went into the matter, not as an amateur, but as a "professional," and of course drew delighted crowds. The only drawback to his performance, in the eyes of the managers, was his rapacity in exacting unheard-of salaries from those in whose circuses he rode, drove, fought, danced, or wrestled. If the amiable Prince Consort were announced to appear in some daring act in Leicester Square or over the water, there would be seen such a gathering as had not come together for many a long year; but, then, if he insisted on receiving a hundred thousand pounds for each performance, the speculation would hardly be remunerative to the proprietors.

There were several Roman emperors addicted to the public exhibition of themselves in a mountebank capacity, and to the exaction of unreasonable recompense. Emperors of later date have, in a modified degree, evinced the same predilections. Greatest amongst these was Maximilian, whose taste for hard drinking was so stoutly remonstrated against by his exasperated subjects. It was after one "grand remonstrance" of this quality that the German emperor performed a trick which few modern mountebanks, it may be, would care to attempt. His sacred majesty had been rather rudely told that drunkenness was bringing his own constitution, as well as that of the country, to irretrievable ruin. Thereupon he summoned the remonstrants to the great square at Ulm, in whose presence he soon after appeared standing on the most elevated parapet of the cathedral. While thus placed, a heavy cart-wheel was put within his reach, and this he grasped in one hand, raised it aloft in the air, and then extending one foot balanced the wheel upon it, while with the other he stood firm and unmoved on the parapet. At such an exhibition, the burghers below were in mingled terror and ecstasy; but they were unanimous in their opinion of Maximilian. They could not doubt that a man who was so admirable a mountebank must possess every qualification that was indispensable in an emperor.

Again, there was no inconsiderable portion of the mountebank spirit in the old French court. It culminated, not ungracefully, in that of Marie Antoinette, and it most strongly possessed the breast of the king's brother, the Comte d'Artois. The count was not a very awkward rope-dancer, and he was a very respectable juggler. One evidence of his power as a conjurer, he manifested in a very practical way. The queen had been laughing at the story of Aladdin and the palace which, by magic power, was built in a night. The count protested that, without such juggling assistance, he would accomplish nearly as much. He really kept his word. Within a week there appeared on a desolate spot adjacent to the city of Paris a charming miniature palace, with all its appointments complete in every respect, including an exquisite garden and indispensable fountains. The whole was called "Bagatelle," and by its erection the Bourbon prince acquired the name of "the prince of conjurers." This was altogether out of the common way; but from private rope-practice in his younger days to the administration of a kingdom in his older days, this excellent mountebank never allowed his hand to forget its cunning. As Comte d'Artois, he created Bagatelle in a week; as King Charles X. he upset his own dynasty, and raised another in half the time.

While royal amateurs have thus descended from the throne to the streets, we meet with regularly trained practitioners who have raised themselves from the streets to be the possessors of wealthy homes, a handsome carriage, and a vote for the county. Some among us may remember having seen Belzoni, as the "Patagonian Samson," taking up heavily-encumbered kitchen-tables by his teeth, and bearing paving-stones

to be shattered on his breast by sledge-hammers, long before they heard of him as an explorer in ancient Egypt, or read the modest narrative of his explorings. So, years previous to that in which I first saw Rachel queen-ing it in her palace in the Rue Trudier, I had seen her, a fragile child, standing on a yard-square of old carpet, in the Champs Elysées, reciting snatches of classical tragedies to the harsh accompaniment of an old woman who could not play on the violin. Half of the old proprietors of the chief booths in our fairs, when we were a fair-going people, realised handsome fortunes, the foundations of which were laid on the hard stones of the streets of London, or of other large cities. This was a more difficult achievement in the olden times for "professors" generally than it should be now for particular individuals,—if there be any beside Blondin who obtains one hundred pounds sterling for each performance. This I take to be an exceptional case; but when you remember that the reward for one exhibition of rope-dancing amounts to four times the sum that Milton received for writing *Paradise Lost*, you will be excused if, like Porson, you fling some very strong expletive against the "nature of things." The fortunes, however, to which I have been alluding, have been patiently reared by slow process of smaller component parts. I have had the good fortune to see, in manuscript, the autobiography of the well-known Mr. Nelson Lee, a gentleman who has written a greater number of dramatic pieces than Calderon, De Vega, and M. Scribe, put together. I will not anticipate information that is to appear in print; but, as germane to my subject, I may notice that Nelson Lee, a member of a good family, was in the course of his career compelled, by the same influences which drove Ruy Blas into livery, to go down into the streets with a brother, and there win bread by a series of open-air performances, the profits of which soon lifted the two partners out of the kennel, and set one at least on the road to fortune, honestly achieved, of the origin of which its architect is in no wise ashamed, and which may he long enjoy!

This has been a genuine success. On the other hand, there have been many failures. The most promising mountebank whom I can recall to mind is one who was realising great wealth in the East, by the exhibition of a bear, who played very skilfully on the piano. The sultan was as anxious to witness Bruin's performance as William III., who cared little for the drama, was fond of patronising the "strong men" of his time, and paying them moderately for extraordinary exhibitions of their power. The sultan, that unmuzzled lion, was so delighted with the artistic qualities of the musical bear, that, placing five hundred piastres in his owner's hands, he ordered the latter to quit the palace and leave the bear behind him. The proprietor of the animal was compelled to obey; but his obedience brought with it much perplexity, for Bruin was no other than his own cousin, a musician, sewed up in a bear-skin. The keeper made his way speedily beyond the eye and hand of the police, while the bear was deposited temporarily in the stables of the palace. From this durance he cautiously broke at night, crossed the Tophane in

a boat, was discovered and pursued. In the exertion to escape he burst his outer skin; and being seized and conducted before the *cadi*, was only liberated after such an application of the *bastinado* as spoiled his dancing for ever afterwards.

Let me remark to those who are disposed to look with unmitigated contempt on this poor plumed and spangled gentry, that there is not one of them who has assumed the vocation of his own accord. It has been to them a matter of compulsion, and their early jackets were laced with more tears than gold embroidery. Nevertheless, in their "involuntary servitude" they are as pains-taking as if they loved the labour. It is easy to say that had the amount of application bestowed by them to achieve perfection in their peculiar line been given to the accomplishment of more useful tasks, they would have been more profitable, and might have been more distinguished members of society. Poor fellows, they have never had the chance; but, on the other hand, each man exerts himself to the very utmost to distinguish himself in that state of life in which chance, contempt, or, who shall say? design has placed him. For my part, whenever I see a hard-toiling group of this family, who daily risk their life and are hourly in some grave if lesser peril, for the sake of bread, I have for them the compassionate feeling which once impelled an earl's young son, at Astley's, to call aloud to the illustrious Mr. Widdicombe, who was horsewhipping a clown with well-simulated severity, "Sir, sir, you mus'n't hurt that poor man; he makes me laugh!"

J. D.

London Poems.

VI. A CITY PREACHER.

WITH Soul that, pure as Sabbath psalms,
 Sings poised on soaring pinions,
 I seek the church of God to hear
 Good news from God's dominions ;
 And by the Sabbath-day I mean
 The Sabbath of a heart made clean,
 To take God's best revealings—
 Divine and gracious feelings.

On my Soul's tablet, as I pray,
 Made low and single-hearted,
 God writes His comment that sweet Day
 On the six days departed ;
 And in His comments, that or this,
 I find no interdict of bliss,
 For Duty puts no measure
 To proper human pleasure.

But yonder Pulpit has a voice
 To mock what Love thus teaches—
 " Woe to the wicked who rejoice !"
 The noisy Pulpit preaches ;
 And preaching thus asserts this scroll,
 This blessed Bible of my Soul,
 This, God-created solely,
 To be a lie unholy.

Hear it, O anxious crowd,—take heed
 Or down to darkness tumble,
 Distrust this God-created creed
 Which keeps us pure and humble ;
 Forsake your pleasures and your balms,
 And gnash your teeth to organ-psalms ;
 And contradict, ye nations,
 Hope's sweeter aspirations.

Hear it, thou toiling City-man,
 Or never be forgiven ;
 Go to your dungeon, eat your bran,
 Shut out the light of heaven ;

Burrow in darkness like a mole ;
For Satan made this lie your Soul,
This bounteous joy-dispenser,
This light within the censer !

Hear it, and quench all human love,
Ye lordlings and ye ladies,
God interdicts all light above,
Conceding light in Hades—
Hope, Joy, and Love are fleshly lies,
And Want and Woe are Paradise :
God kills, that He may win us,
All light divine within us.

Oh, hollow cheat ! that wounds the mind
With narrow creeds and feelings,—
That kills the Soul and makes it blind
To all sublime revealings,—
That chokes the undeveloped trust,
The seed of Godhead, into dust,—
That makes this flesh a hovel
Where slimy monsters grovel.

Joy is a portion of the Word
Whence clearer light we borrow,
Men in their joy approach the Lord
More near than in their sorrow :
God lit dark skies with sun and moon,
And set them to a golden tune ;
He set the Soul, our gladness,
Within the flesh, our sadness.

Through light and darkness Nature rolls,
Through light and fleshly leaven—
Joy is the music made by Souls
When most in tune with Heaven ;
And we are like the common flowers,
Which, taking both the sun and showers,
Take from the sun above me
The hues which make them lovely.

And every little blossom strives
To help the summer-Maying ;
Joy gives a colour to our lives,
And is the heart of praying :

We human drones on shifting soil
See glints of heaven in our toil,
Can hear the flute and tabor,
Though never ceasing labour.

Religion grows from thoughts and deeds,
The work we men inherit,
And he must question all the creeds
Who questions his own Spirit ;
And those who wear a prison-dress
Subtract this life's unloveliness,
Its bitter sunless duty,
From God the Father's beauty.

O Pulpit, that wouldst prove us alime,
Poor things for beasts to pity,
Is yours the doctrine for the Time,
The Labour, and the City ?
To fill our crowded streets and marts
With worship born of human hearts,
To aid the work now doing,
The end we are pursuing ?

I vindicate this Soul from care
That mocks us in our starkness.
God made this Soul a shrine where Prayer
May touch His Hand in darkness ;
It labours for the common end,
And Joy, your bugbear, is a friend
Which teaches it while living
Its worship and thanksgiving.

Pulpit, a light like that above
Burns on our calm home-altars,
Our household shrines where Joy and Love
Are priests as well as psalters ;
Our loves are born without alloy,
Our tears but dignify our joy,
And Christ returns to bless us
When baby-arms caress us.

And Faith in God finds proper soil
In faith in man and woman,
In that freemasonry of toil
Embracing all things human.

When tortured texts our peace annoy
Our woe is^d blinder than our joy,
And quenches in its blindness
The light of human kindness.

Pulpit, whose words of war and strife
Mock yonder starry crescent,
We cannot mend the Future Life
Through warring on the present :
Our loves, our joys, our human ties,
Are tiny steps to Paradise ;
And woe without cessation
Is base humiliation.

Remember, Pulpit, the sublime
Sweet Bethlehem called Pity ;
Yours is mean doctrine for the Time,
The Labourer, and the City ;
Our streets are black enough without
Unhallowed clouds of pain and doubt ;
Who weep for aye in Tophet
Insult the gift they covet.

Love proves her reverence, I know,
By hate of all displaying,
And hearts that hate prayer's hollow show
Unconsciously are praying :
Christ came in human shape to prove
The common truths of Hope and Love ;
And if the Lord would win us,
His Christ must dwell within us.

B.

For Better, for Worse.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MOST willingly Margaret had lingered on at Grafton, installing Katie in her new home, and assisting Ralph in his plans and arrangements for his parish work; but her visit was shortened by the accounts Gracie gave of her mother's health. Through her agent, Margaret had learnt that an ample sum of money for Frank had been placed at his disposal by Lord Redenham; and though Ralph and Grace both stormed at the insult, Margaret persisted that for Ethelind's sake it was right to accept her husband's first acknowledgment of her family. It would enable her now to quit Deighton, and remove Mrs. Atherton to a more bracing climate.

She found, on her return to Deighton, her mother was looking old and careworn; and Susannah had grown anxious, and joyfully welcomed Margaret. Grace had grown into great favour with the Weldons, as well as their nephew, a Mr. Chudleigh, a rising young barrister, who had been visiting at the Rectory, and whom Grace declared the good Rector and his sister had brought there with the laudable intention of retaining Margaret in their own possession. Rachel Grey, with her grave staid manner and quiet self-possession, had grown used to take command; and with Annie Morley to assist, there seemed little fear of failure.

"This termination to your residence among us is so unexpected, it comes upon us like a thunder-clap," Mr. Weldon said, with strong emotion struggling in his usually cheerful face. "We see you are right; so I can only say God bless you, and make you as great a comfort and help to others as you have been to us;" and he pulled his hat over his brows, and turned back to the Rectory.

After consulting the best medical opinion, Margaret took her mother and sister to Brighton.

Nearly all correspondence with Lady Redenham had died away. Grace's long letters to Ethel had extorted only one or two short notes in reply, which had left (if the truth were told) a sore spot on Grace's heart. Mrs. Atherton never failed to look down the fashionable movements of Belgravia for any mention the papers might give of her child's gay doings. She was growing imperceptibly into the belief, that to speak of Ethel as "my daughter Lady Redenham," amongst their small circle of acquaintance, was the only gratification the connection afforded her. Grace studiously read Philip's speeches in Parliament. A man who could be "great" in every thing but his domestic relations could be no hero in Grace's eyes, and she felt almost angry with herself for taking any interest in him at all; but Margaret was always ready to vindicate Philip

against Ralph or Grace, though there was much she could not understand. His devotion to Ethelind she never doubted. That he was proud and arbitrary and reserved, required little penetration to discover; and this, perhaps, acting on Ethel's quick sensitive disposition, had forced back her love, and had replaced it by fear and timidity. Whether Ethel had outlived her affection for Philip, or whether she had really only feared and never loved him, was a puzzle which often harassed her in retracing her visit to Redenham.

Amongst others, the Repworths were at Brighton, for Sir John's health; and from them they gleaned constant intelligence of Lord and Lady Redenham.

"She has grown dreadfully thin, and looks as pale as death if you meet her early in the day," Lady Repworth said; "but she is flushed of an evening, and her eyes are so large and bright, it would make me very uneasy if I were her husband."

"Goes to two or three parties of a night," Sir John added; "turning the heads of the men, young and old. You would never believe she was the little timid girl I remember her at Repworth. To be on her visiting list is every thing—quite an introduction to the best society."

"But, then, you must remember how much Lord Redenham is thought of. Quite the rising man; such a clear business head, combined with such sound judgment and discrimination."

At the Repworths' the Athertons made the acquaintance of a Mrs. Aylmer. Grace was particularly taken with her and her two little girls. They were going abroad for two years, and Mrs. Aylmer was wishing to hear of some lady who would accompany her as friend and companion, and assist her in the education of her little girls.

"If she is really as fascinating and good on a nearer acquaintance as we have found her, I should like to go with her myself," Grace said.

"You?" Margaret exclaimed, raising her eyes hastily from her work, and looking anxiously at her sister. "Why, Gracie, what can have made you think of it?" Grace was playing nervously with the bunch of charms on her watch-chain.

"You know, Maggie," she said, "I am a great believer in instincts, and my heart warmed to Mrs. Aylmer at the first sight. Then, I have long wanted to go abroad; and besides, I feel I ought to do more than live on idly at home, as I am now doing. It is not good for me; it makes me grow weary and discontented. This seems such a good opportunity, that had it not been for mamma, I would say, 'Let me go at once.'"

Margaret watched the colour come and go over her sister's face. She was silent for a minute. Then she said quickly, "I do not think mamma's health need prevent your going, Grace; she is much stronger now, and so anxious you should see more of the world. I do not think she would place any needless obstacles in your way. If you really mean

all you say, I will find out what I can about Mrs. Aylmer, and see if it would be a pleasant or desirable arrangement for you."

That same afternoon Margaret went to the Repworths, to gather, indirectly, all the information she could of Mrs. Aylmer. And then, taking that lady into her confidence (with Mrs. Atherton's full concurrence), it was settled that Grace, under the pleasant title of "friend," and with no other remuneration than her travelling expenses, should spend abroad with the Aylmers the following two years.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was the middle of July. Parliament had not broken up, and weary statesmen and worn-out dowagers were looking anxiously forward to the 12th of August, when the powerful attractions of the moor should supersede even the most urgent business of the State, and disperse the West-End population into the free air of their country homes.

Philip had often urged Ethel to take her child and go down for a time to Redenham; but she shook her head, and would not listen to the proposition. It was not the society of her husband which tied her to London. Between his parliamentary labours, his club, and Ethel's perpetual round of gaiety, they now seldom met, unless in a room full of strangers, or from some unsatisfactory encounter over their various plans and arrangements.

A great change had imperceptibly come over Ethelind since her marriage. She had become easy and self-possessed in spite of her timidity. She had striven hard to overcome her dislike to her husband's mother and sisters; and though Barbara knew she could always, if she chose, make her wince under her thoughtless tongue, on the whole Ethelind was better able to encounter her raillery; while Diana candidly acknowledged her beauty was her least attraction. The only marvel to her was her remaining so entirely unspoiled by the open admiration she universally inspired.

The fierce beams of a mid-day sun shut out of her morning room by sun-blinds, Ethel was leisurely sipping her coffee and idly turning over the pages of the *Morning Post*, casting occasional glances down the long columns occupied by her husband's speech, which had electrified the House the night before.

A tap at the door was followed by the entrance of Barbara.

"Don't disturb yourself," she said; "I only came to talk to you for a few minutes;" and she threw herself into the arm-chair opposite. "How cool and comfortable it feels here after the heat and glare of the sun!" she added, as she untied her bonnet-strings, and laid it on the chair beside her.

"Now," she said, "I want to ask you, if Diana comes to you, to be very careful about the advice you offer her."

"What possible advice can she seek of me?" Ethel replied in astonishment. "She should go to Philip."

"That is my opinion, but Di thinks differently. She swears by you, and declares you will stand her friend against all of us. The truth is, Philip was not over-wise, considering all things, when he gave Arthur Langton the living at Leigh-Delamere. Of course he did it with the best intentions to serve an old friend, never supposing he would presume upon it. Be that as it may, yesterday's post brought a letter from him to Diana, saying he was now in a position to sue again for her hand, and he is to be in Eaton Place to-morrow, for the purpose of a last appeal. Poor Di is in a dreadful state of excitement, and I am quite sure, unless we are all very positive, more especially yourself, Lady Redenham, she will never find it in her heart to reject him."

"Do not let her come to me," Ethel exclaimed nervously; "rather let her consult Philip, or you, or Mrs. Leigh."

"You would take the romantic side of the question," Barbara said, fixing her black eyes on Ethelind's flushed face. "Of course you feel bound to stand by all love-matches."

"I don't know what I could advise," Ethel replied hurriedly. "It is a difficult question. Once, a long time ago, before I was married, perhaps I might have done so; but not now. Unequal marriages are not wise, no matter whether in station, age, temper, or any thing else. They are a great risk and a great trial—a trial which cannot be understood, cannot be felt, until it is too late. No! I do not think I could advise any one to run the risk, not even Di herself."

Barbara looked at Ethelind's flushed face, and listened to her low nervous voice. She had seldom seen her so excited.

"Well," she said lightly, "I certainly did not expect to find you on our side. I thought of course you would uphold Di. I am very glad we have you with us. Not, after all, by the way, that you know much about it, your beauty has done so much for you; and besides, a wife takes rank and position from her husband. Now, if Di marries Arthur Langton, she becomes simply a 'parson's wife,' and falls of course into his set. As I told her to-day, she must make up her mind to be cut by all her old friends. What his are, Heaven knows! He is decent enough himself, poor fellow; but neither he nor she can expect us to recognise them."

"It is a hard trial to sacrifice your own family even for a husband's love," Ethel said, in a low quivering tone. "Still, with it, it can be done; only Diana should think well of it before she sees Mr. Langton."

"That is the awkwardness of the thing. I believe a little wholesome advice from some one she could trust would turn the scale; only it will be impossible to prevent their meeting. When we go down to Redenham or Leigh Court, there will be no help for it, and our labour now will be lost."

"One of the inconveniences of Mr. Langton being so close to you."

"Say, rather," Barbara replied sharply, "it is one of the inconveniences of Mr. Clifford throwing up the living. Well," she added, with a yawn, as

she rose up to go, "I have said my say. If Diana really thinks such a life will suit her, let her take the Reverend Arthur 'for better, for worse,' as far as I am concerned, and Heaven help her! In five years' time she will have sunk down into a positive household drudge. She will have no end of socks to mend and garments to repair. There will be a house full of children—there always is in a clergyman's home; she will sport a cotton umbrella, print-gown, and thick shoes, and spend the little time she can spare from her household labours in visiting the sick, teaching the village-school, and touching up her husband's sermons! She won't even have the advantage of mixing now and then in decent society, they will be too poor or too philanthropic to visit; so her only relaxation will be the society of her husband's relations. I would not stand in her shoes for any thing she could offer me."

Ethelind could not help laughing. "She would hardly wish you should, perhaps," she said. "And who knows but this *fête* you go to to-morrow may not give you enough to do on your own account, without interfering on Diana's!"

A blush Barbara in vain tried to hide suffused her face, and made her black eyes fall for a moment. "As if I cared a straw for a fellow who flirts and falls in love with every pretty face he sees," she said.

"Will you ask Lord Redcar when he starts for Munich, if you see him to-night?" Ethel said. "I am wishing to send a little present to my sister, and I would rather trust it to him than to the post."

"Which sister?" Barbara asked quickly. "That demure-looking Quakeress who nursed you in your illness?"

"No; the one you saw at Redenham, when we first went down there. Lord Redcar remembers her. He danced with her several times that evening, and has frequently spoken of her since."

"Oh, yes, I remember,—a very pretty girl—very like you! He is always talking about her, and declares, next to you, she is the best-looking girl he knows. I don't think he means to go to Munich," she added hastily; "so I should not recommend your waiting. Better send off your parcel, and say nothing to him about it." She wished Ethelind good-by.

The door had hardly closed after her before she put her head in again. "By the by, I had quite forgotten to tell you, we had a letter from Ann Leigh this morning. Some business which requires Philip's advice will bring her up to London. Will you tell Philip to meet her by the six o'clock express to-morrow evening?" And, without another word, the head was withdrawn and the door closed.

A thunder-clap could hardly have startled Ethel more completely. Walking hastily to and fro the large room, she tried to recover her composure, and face the ordeal which awaited her.

Long and earnestly she had been battling with the demon jealousy, until she sometimes believed no real cause for it existed, and that it must have been some phantasy of her diseased brain, under the excitement of

fever and delirium. How often in the quiet watches of the night, as she lay awake listening for the click of the latch-key in the hall-door, and the long strides of Philip's footsteps, as he passed up the silent staircase, would she go over and over the numberless confirmatory circumstances she could now almost number on her fingers! Small enough they were, but nevertheless giving her unutterable anguish and distress.

"If he had but told me!" she would exclaim bitterly, "I think I could have borne it. But to marry me only for my beauty!—a thing which may perish any day. To imagine that because I was a poor girl I should be satisfied and honoured by the connection, without caring for more!" and she let her head drop on her arms, and her tears fell until heart and eyes ached in sympathy.

Lately she had tutored herself into a calm and quiet exterior. She would try and wait patiently until Heaven blessed her with a son; for vague hopes flitted across her troubled mind of what great things a son might effect for her.

Now, however, this sudden announcement of Ann Leigh's visit quite upset her. Philip and Ann would meet, while she, standing patiently by, would see her hopes ruthlessly scattered by this one week's visit. Even if she ran away, and forsook husband and child, she must go! Her burden was becoming more intolerable than she could bear.

With an aching heart, and hot tearful eyes, she sat on in her sun-blinded room, unable to do any thing, or see any one, during the rest of the day. When Philip came home, Ethel was lying on the sofa, looking white and haggard, and her eyes red and swollen.

"My dear Ethel, are you ill?" he asked anxiously, as he came to her. "What on earth is the matter?"

"I have a headache," she said; and she sat up and tried to speak cheerfully.

"It is these ruinously late hours you are keeping," he replied. "Enough to kill any one twice as strong as you are. Why will you persist in making one engagement after another, as you do, when you know what the end of it will be?"

Ethel pushed back her hair from her throbbing forehead, and passed her hand wearily over her burning eyes, to shut out the glare of the lamp. Philip was struck by the haggard look her face wore.

"Ann Leigh comes to-morrow," she said in a low tone, without looking up. "Your mother wishes you to meet her at the station at six o'clock."

"Ann Leigh! What can bring her to town in this hot weather?"

"Business of some sort, I believe; I don't know what."

"I wish she would offer to take you and the child back with her. Sea-air would do you both good. Remember, Ethel, if she proposes it, I will not have you refuse. Do you hear?" he added, as Ethel made no reply.

She was making a desperate effort. He was standing on the hearth-

rug with his back to the fireplace, looking down upon her and wondering what had so upset her.

"Philip," she said, raising her eyes to his entreatingly, "will you let me go home?"

A cloud gathered over his brow, but Ethel did not see it. She had lost all control over her tears, and her face was hidden in her handkerchief. He watched her for a moment, and then said, in a short dry tone, which was no unusual one, "What makes you so very anxious to go away now? I begged you to do so a short time ago, and you would not hear of it. And just after your illness I offered to take you myself to see your own people, and you decidedly refused. Now, just as Ann Leigh is to be here, and I want you to be with her, you suddenly take it into your head to go and see your mother. Where is your mother? How do you know she can receive you?"

"Mamma and Margaret are at Brighton," Ethelind replied, making a strong effort to recover her composure.

"Is your mother ill?" he asked, stopping in the middle of a walk up and down the room.

"I have had no news of them for a long time."

Philip pushed his hands deeper into his trouser-pockets as he continued his long strides. Ethelind, the simple guileless girl he had married, whose very thoughts he had been able to read, was becoming a riddle to him. He hardly knew whether to be most angry with her or with himself. "Perhaps this is what Redcar has hinted at lately," he thought, "when he has warned me she was too young to be left so much alone."

Philip was not naturally despotic or unreasonable, but he felt chafed and irritated now at what really did wear the appearance of the waywardness of a spoiled child. He saw the lines of care about her mouth, the dark purple rings round her sunken eyes, and his heart relented. She was ill, there was no doubt of it; and, like some little child, who scarcely knows its own wishes, she was pining for her own mother's love.

"I wish I could understand you, Ethie," he said; "but you are a great riddle to me; and I want you to remember there should be none between us now. No matter what our feelings may be towards others, to ourselves we should be open as the day. What is it that has brought on this sudden fit of home-sickness?"

Ethel's head fell on Philip's shoulder; and, amidst convulsive sobs, which quite shook her slight frame, she said very earnestly, "If you love me, do let me go home!"

Long after Ethelind had wept herself to sleep, Philip might have been heard pacing slowly up and down his own room. With all his love for Ethelind, and his own bright hopes of married life, he had failed in either making his wife happy or lightening his own cares. How or in what way, he could not tell. The Leigh pride had been violated, and he had sought to soothe it by implicitly following the advice of his mother and sisters. Perhaps the time had come when some reparation might be

made for such hard measures on Ethel. He would speed her off before they knew of the arrangements; and he kept his word. The next day he himself sent Ethel by express train, under charge of Stephens, on her sudden visit to Brighton.

CHAPTER XXIX.

STARTLED beyond measure at the apparition of Ethel's pale face, Margaret clasped her eagerly in her arms.

"I have not felt well," Ethelind said hurriedly, and with a deep colour on her cheeks at any evasion, however slight, from the exact truth. "I cannot tell you, Margaret, how I have longed to see you and mamma; and, last night, Philip gave me leave to come to you."

"But not alone, Ethie? Philip could never have trusted you alone, darling?" and Margaret's eyes wandered anxiously over her sister's fragile figure, and she looked into her clear truthful eyes, for she could not at all comprehend the mystery of this sudden exploit. But so far Ethel had nothing to conceal. She said at once that a sudden desire came over her to see her mother; and, dreading Barbara's influence over Philip, she had persuaded him to let her start early, before her intentions were known in Eaton Place. That she would not listen to Philip's wish of accompanying her; that she had even dismissed Valerie and Stephens at the station, that she should in no way put her mother out of her usual course.

It was well for both they had an hour or two quietly together before Margaret told Mrs. Atherton of Ethelind's arrival. It gave Margaret time to gather up her scattered faculties, and so explain Ethel's sudden visit as to save any second explanations.

Except to satisfy the curiosity of her mother, Ethelind said little of her home life. She freely owned she could not love Mrs. Leigh or Barbara, and that most of her annoyances arose in some way or other from their interference.

Diana she had learnt to love and to respect. If at times she was rude or abrupt, it was more from a desire to be honest than unsisterly or unkind. Of Philip little was ever said by Ethelind; but her anxiety for his letters, and her disappointment if they did not come, convinced Margaret that, whatever was harassing her mind, her heart was still "leal and true." An intuitive feeling that the inner life of husband and wife is sacred, even from their own kindred, not only sealed Ethelind's lips, but prevented Margaret from attempting, even indirectly, to lead her to unburden her heart to her. She knew there are some sorrows in which even a sister "intermeddleth not." All she could do for her was to brace her with strong and high resolves; give a healthier tone to her imagination; awake in her an interest in her daily duties; and try to make her brave and hopeful for the future.

The only drawback to Mrs. Atherton's happiness was the absence of Ethel's child. Susannah was loud in her regrets that the little lady had

been left behind. Both in their hearts gave the Earl credit for not letting it accompany its mother, though they would not wound Ethelind by saying so. "It's mother's relations are not good enough for my lord's child," Susannah was heard to say several times rather bitterly; but she always took care that Ethelind did not overhear her.

Ethel listened eagerly to Margaret's description of Ralph's new home. She had never, either directly or indirectly, blamed Philip for his removal from Leigh-Delamere, because she could not help suspecting Barbara's interference had effected it. But it was an intense relief to her to learn from Margaret they were now comfortably settled at Grafton.

A week had passed, and Ethelind, refreshed and strengthened by her visit, had written to Philip for Stephens to fetch her home. His answer was short and hurried—just a pencilled note hastily written at his club. As she reported herself so much recruited by her visit, Philip thought it better she should remain a little longer. He managed very well alone. Indeed, he was hardly ever in Belgrave Square. Godfrey and the child had taken up their abode in Eaton Place. Ann had wished to have it as much with her as possible, and the little thing had grown wonderfully fond of her already.

Ethelind groaned in spirit as she read and re-read the letter. She was thankful it had come to her in her own room, free from the searching eyes of Margaret, or her mother's endless inquiries. All the sunlight of her visit had suddenly disappeared. She had begged hard to come, and Philip had reluctantly granted her leave. She was longing now he should ask her to return; and, when she offered to do so, he intimated she was not wanted. Oh, the perversity of the human heart! At first she thought seriously of starting off at once, and begging Susannah for an escort. But gradually a better frame of mind came over her. She would follow Margaret's advice, and not look forward. She would strive to be patient, and do her duty as it was set before her.

When she ventured into her mother's room, the intelligence that Philip would spare her a little longer so delighted Mrs. Atherton, her joy almost upset Ethel's good resolution. Margaret no longer hesitated in allowing Ethel the privilege of insuring her mother's declining days those comforts which she herself was quite unable to procure. She knew Ralph or Grace would never have consented to her receiving any assistance from a brother-in-law who virtually ignored them; but she felt that, for Ethel's sake, it was only right. Cut off from participation in their care of her mother, this gratification ought surely to be granted her.

At length the joyful summons arrived. Stephens and Valerie would be at the station the following morning; and Margaret inwardly rejoiced as she watched the glow of pleasure lighting up Ethel's face as she read her letter. She looked brighter and happier than she had done for long; and Mrs. Atherton's parting with her favourite child was cheerful and happy, and full of fond hope that, after all, the marriage would turn out far better than Ralph and Grace were so fond of predicting.

There was a grave smile of welcome for Ethelind as Lord Redenham opened the door of the railway-carriage to assist her out, and he remarked at once her visit had certainly very much improved her looks. In their long drive through the City, Ethel had time to learn that Ann Leigh had left town two days ago.

"She was very sorry to miss you," Philip said, "but the heat and dust of London were killing her, and my mother would not let her remain any longer. I don't know what you will say to it," he added, a little doubtfully, "but she has taken Godfrey and the child with her."

"Taken Baby—my baby!" Ethelind exclaimed hurriedly. "You never mentioned it in your letter."

Philip looked half fearful he had done wrong. "I hope I have not distressed you," he said; "but, to tell the truth, she had grown so fond of Ann, and Ann of her, she was seldom out of her sight. I never saw any thing like it. Even Godfrey was growing jealous. So when Ann proposed it, and my mother said how much better country air would be for her, I gave leave. Of course I thought you would not object, you seemed to care so little about her yourself, and Ann really enjoys having her. I am sure she will take the greatest possible care of her."

"I don't doubt that," Ethel said, in a constrained tone; "but they might have waited my return, or written to me first, at all events."

"It was only thought of the night before Ann left; so I could not write to you. Ann hopes you will join the child as soon as you can. Fix your own day, and I will take you down."

"Oh, I am sick of the sea!" Ethelind exclaimed, almost pettishly. "I am sure I am not going from home at present." Two bright-red spots were burning on her cheeks.

"Well, you shall do as you like," Philip said rather meekly. He was beginning to fear he ought not to have relied so entirely on his mother's assurance that Ethel would be glad to be rid of her child. All her pleasure at being again with Philip was spoiled by this foolish arrangement. As they rattled over the stones, the deafening noise forbade talking, and gave her time to recover her self-command.

"And how have you got on?" she asked at last. "I hope you have been busy, and not missed me much?"

"Well," Philip replied, "it has just happened we have been unusually idle. I have hardly been at home at all. I have dined every day in Eaton Place; I could have almost fancied myself a bachelor again. It gave me the opportunity of seeing Ann. She is not like the same creature. I should not wonder if, after all, she lives to be a strong active woman."

Again there was a silence. There was a block up in the narrow street through which they were passing. Philip asked for Mrs. Atherton and Margaret, where Grace had gone, and what news had been received from the midshipman. A brighter look and a happier expression stole over Ethel's face.

"Oh, Philip!" she said, "Margaret told me of your having taken Frank's expenses off her hands. At first I thought she was under a mistake, because I knew nothing about it; but she assured me it came from you. And I do not think even you could have calculated on the good you have done. It enables Margaret to leave Deighton, and live where it best suits mamma's health."

"And what about that brother of hers?" he asked. "Has he a curacy, do you know? He made me monstrously angry, I own, when we first went to Redenham. The fellow's sermons were the best I ever heard, and every body in the parish liked him. Perhaps I was over-hasty in giving Langton the living, and turning him adrift. But Barbara must take the credit of that move. She would not believe it would encourage him to offer again to Di, though I warned her how it would be. But Barbara is very wilful when she sets her heart on a thing. By the way, that is another piece of news for you," he added: "Diana is really engaged to Langton, and they are to be married the end of August."

"But your mother!—Barbara!—what do they say?" Ethel asked, her heart sinking at what Diana would have to endure at the hands of her own people.

"If Ann had not stood her friend, it never could have come to pass. Ann has more influence in Eaton Place than any one else, and she thinks, after their four years' probation, it is better to make the best of it, and let it be. Diana is gone home with Ann; and there, from her house—as quietly as possible—the wedding is to come off."

"Poor Di!" Ethel exclaimed, with a deep sigh. "I wonder if she will be happy?"

Philip looked down at her and laughed. "Is that the extent of your congratulations? I expected you to applaud her for her courage."

"I should once; but one grows nervous and doubtful as one gets older. However, for Diana, who has strength of mind not to care for what people say, it is all right; and if Ann is her friend, she will soon persuade you all to look on the connection favourably."

"By the way, there is another change you will notice, when you get home, which, I think, will please you: that horrid woman Blake is gone, and Mrs. Edwards—'Old Edwards' you have heard us speak of—is in her place. You will wonder how, in your absence, such a revolution was effected; but things were going on in a way I had no conception of: servants won't tell of each other, and though they were all uneasy, no one liked to speak. It came out at last through Godfrey, in some of her long stories with Ann's maid, and so to Ann, who asked me about it. Of course I sent for the woman, and by dint of being very determined, and threatening all sorts of things, succeeded at last in getting at the truth; and, as you may guess, I packed her straight off the premises in less than an hour. Then it came out, through Valerie, she had made a boast in the servants' hall of having made you fear her; that she could make you believe any story she chose to tell you."

The tears were in Ethel's eyes. "She terrified me from the first time I saw her; but your mother and Barbara always insisted she was an admirable servant, only she took advantage of my being young and inexperienced. I am very glad she is gone;" and she breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"Well," Philip said, "Ann proposed our having Edwards back. And as she knows our ways, and will relieve you of so much care and responsibility, we sent to her; and you will find her at home when we get there."

Poor Ethie, she hardly knew whether to be most pleased or angry at this interference in her household. Sore as her heart was at the abduction of her child, no wonder she did not feel quite so grateful as she otherwise would have been.

While dressing for dinner, Ethelind learnt from Valerie the increased comfort of the servants' hall, under the quiet, careful, and yet stricter discipline which Mrs. Edwards had at once established. One glance at the arrangements of the table, as she took her seat at dinner, convinced her that, as regarded Mrs. Edwards, Ann Leigh had rendered her an inestimable benefit.

To Barbara's tirades against her sister's marriage, Ethelind turned a deaf ear. She was obliged to listen to Mrs. Leigh's long lectures on the folly of mixed marriages,—lectures so personal and so bitter, that even Ethel's gentle spirit rose within her. She did not wonder at Diana's availing herself of peace and quiet under Ann's roof.

There was a happy unrestrained light-heartedness pervading Diana's reply to Ethelind's letter of congratulation, strangely contrasting with her former cold reserve. It seemed as if the acceptance of Arthur Langton's love had awakened her sympathies, and opened the floodgates of her heart, and given her a new sense of the responsibilities of life.

"Poor Di," Lord Redcar exclaimed, as he and Lady Redenham sat chatting in Ethel's opera-box, "she seems to have found out at last there really is something in the world worth living for. It does one good to see her face wear such a much happier expression."

"I have not seen her since it all came about," Ethelind replied; "I only fear it will be at a cost she has not calculated. No one but those who have tried it know how hard it is to give up your own family."

"You mean that it is all '*couleur de rose*' with Di now, but that by and by, when she is a parson's wife, and the tug of war begins, she will repent her bargain."

"No, you mistake me," she said. "I was thinking of another day, when a longing comes over her for her mother and sister's love. Not even a husband's entirely compensates for that loss. Mrs. Leigh and Barbara declare they will never acknowledge Mr. Langton and his family. But at Redenham or Leigh Court it will be impossible to avoid a collision, and then it will be Diana who will suffer."

"What a lot of humbug there is in the world! it is the only thing

Redenham and I quarrel over. As if we were not all flesh and blood, subject to the same laws, human and divine! Now, I take it, every man has some absurd crotchet or other, which he nurses and treasures until he believes it is a virtue,—and this, I maintain, is his. As if one man's blood was not as thick as another's! As if it could make an atom of difference to any of us at the last what was the length of our genealogical tree!"

Ethelind laughed.

"Ah, I see how it is," Lord Redcar said; "you are getting inoculated with the Leigh doctrine, Lady Redenham, and setting me down for a Chartist. I do grow angry sometimes when I see sensible men like Redenham setting up some idol, and then running a tilt against the world, who won't worship it as they do. Now I would not like to see a girl like Diana Leigh throw herself away on an adventurer; but they have known Langton for years. He was at Eton and Oxford, and is as gentlemanly and right-principled a fellow as I know. Then he is by no means badly off; he can afford her all reasonable comforts. More than that, his family, in spite of Barbara's tirades, are sensible, straightforward people, not at all pretending. His father is, or was, a merchant or some such thing; looked up to, they tell me, as a pattern of honesty and uprightness. And really, if she likes him,—and she has proved it by her constancy,—I for one can't see why she may not please herself."

"Nor I; but I suppose they think they are right."

"Well, she has Ann Leigh on her side. Ann can do more for her than any one else. Her opinion is law with them all." Then he said, rather suddenly, "Lady Redenham, I think sometimes of doing something desperate myself. Do you think I look stout enough to outlive the storm I should raise about my ears?"

Ethelind caught the expression of his merry mischievous eyes. "I don't understand you," she said.

"Don't you?" he replied. "Well, I am getting tired of a bachelor-life. I start next week with Woodmancote in his yacht for the Mediterranean. I shall leave him at Venice, and return overland. If I pick up some pretty young wife whose beauty outweighs her pedigree, do you think Redenham will condescend to acknowledge us? I should never dare show myself in Barbara's presence again."

A vision of Grace rushed across her. Barbara's bitter disappointment! Mrs. Leigh's anger! It almost took away her breath. She knew Lord Redcar had never proposed to Barbara—had never said a word which could be construed into an intention of doing so. She knew that he and Barbara kept up a warfare of tastes and opinions on every imaginable subject, which, with a less good temper than Lord Redcar's, might have ended as many other of her friendships had done. She knew that he rather enjoyed the fun and excitement of their squabbles and reconciliations; whether he would equally enjoy them if ever they became "squabbles matrimonial" was very doubtful. The world said such

flirtations could only end in a proposal. Ethel believed that Barbara hoped so, even if it were only to show her power in rejecting him. Ethel felt she had no right to speak of Barbara as if it would in any way concern her whatever he might choose to do. So she asked if he would trust her with the name of the lady.

"You shall hear it, Lady Redenham, as soon as I have committed myself. I shall have to trust to your interest to make my peace with Redenham and the Leighs."

"You forget; I may not approve any more than they," she replied.

"I think you would; at least I hope so. I may even need your good word with the lady herself."

A colour came into Ethelind's cheeks. "Lord Redcar," she said, almost nervously, "will you listen to a word of advice?"

"I am quite open to any advice you can give me; and, moreover, I engage to think well of it before I commit myself. What is it, Lady Redenham?"

"That you will assure yourself your family and all your friends approve; that you do nothing hastily. And now, if you please," she added, "I will trouble you to find my carriage."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE 12th of August came at last. Mrs. Leigh and Barbara had already joined Ann's party at Bonchurch; and Philip, at Ann's request, had consented to give away the bride. Ethelind had striven to banish thought about the ordeal in store for her. To think would have been simply to have rendered the effort impossible. She and Philip to be together under Ann's roof—Ann's guest! For Diana's sake—for the sake of doing as she would be done by—it was necessary she should be there; and trying to stifle thought by active exertion, she had kept herself for the last fortnight in a perpetual whirl of excitement, such as she had never indulged in before. Perhaps she could hardly have taken a surer method of counteracting her good intentions. Caught in a thunder-shower while driving in the Park, she had become wet through; but worn out, bodily and mentally, she could not resist the effects of the chill, or shake off the inflammatory symptoms which threatened even more serious ills. And, to Philip's infinite annoyance and Ethel's secret joy, the medical dictum positively forbade any attempt at leaving town for a fortnight, and then only for the most perfect rest, either at Redenham or by the sea-side. So serious was Philip's discomposure, Ethelind felt positively thankful no wilfulness of her own had produced this untoward result. At first he declared he would not go; Diana might get whom she pleased for a substitute; he would have nothing at all to do with it. But when Ann wrote urging it, if Ethel was at all well enough to be left, Philip reluctantly promised to be with them the night before the wedding.

Poor Ethie, well for her jealous heart no magic mirror presented

to her gaze the gathering of that little procession as it mustered in the chancel of the small picturesque church which stands facing the wide blue sea beneath the frowning cliffs of St. Boniface.

Ann trembled visibly. It was an unusual effort for her; and besides this, on her rested the entire responsibility of the marriage, against which had been arrayed all the prejudices of a proud family. It was very far from being a merry wedding. Perhaps the really happiest faces were those of the bride and bridegroom. Tears were in Mrs. Leigh's eyes, which it seemed her studious endeavour to hide or repress. Barbara was short and undemonstrative; Philip, quiet and preoccupied, thinking, perhaps, of his own wedding, not altogether dissimilar, a short while ago, and wondering whether it would be Diana's fate, equally with himself, to find how unsatisfactorily unequal marriages turn out. Maternal love had at last vanquished pride, and Mrs. Leigh, drowned in tears, was straining her child to her bosom. It was to be their first separation; for she and Barbara were to start the next day on a long tour abroad. Barbara had persuaded her mother that it would be better to let the world's wonder over Diana's marriage die out before they personally braved its opinion.

As the brougham drove away, the ladies one after another disappeared, and Philip went in search of his child. Miss Leigh, the servants told him, had taken her little ladyship away in her wheel-chair; most likely they were gone down towards the old churchyard. By a side-path Philip came on Ann's chair, and her little page beside it absorbed in "Leonard the Lion-hearted." Farther on, on her camp-stool, Ann sat with a large needle threading an endless chain of daisies, which little Beatrice, with a shout of glee, was tossing into her lap, and every now and then losing her balance, and in her wavering efforts to regain it threatening to upset her companion also.

"You have chosen a strange place for your gambols, Ann. If my little one had been older, you would make her prematurely sad," he said, drawing near to them.

Ann started. "Bee and I were so absorbed in our work we had no time to look about us. There, darling," she said, "go to papa; and let him see there are not many signs of sadness in that merry little face."

Philip took the child in his arms, then put her down gently, and threw himself beside them, on a piece of projecting rock.

"I did wrong in letting you kidnap her, Ann," he said. "But Ethel must thank you when she sees how much good this bright sea air has done her."

"Not more for her than my little 'busy bee's' love has done for me," Ann replied earnestly. "That baby's love is filling up the void in my heart, which I thought nothing in this world could. You must tell Ethel so. Barbara said you heard from her; I hope she is better."

Lord Redenham drew the letter from his pocket. "I have hardly had time to read it myself," he said, "only I knew by its being her own

handwriting, she must be so." He ran his eye over it a second time, and then put it back.

"What a lottery marriage is!" Philip said abruptly. "A man stakes his life's happiness on a throw. It is an awful thing if it turns up a blank."

"Your words frighten me," Ann exclaimed nervously. "You forget how I have been labouring to bring it about. But it must be right," she added energetically; "Di is so earnest and good, so anxious to adapt herself to her new life: and Langton is very high-principled, and most grateful for the sacrifices she makes for his sake. Oh, I am sure they cannot be otherwise than happy."

"And will fail, perhaps, at the last, in some unaccountable way, just as utterly as I have done."

"Philip!" Ann turned round suddenly on her cousin. She could see the muscles of his forehead and mouth working nervously.

He got up hastily, as if ashamed of the emotion he could not hide. "Forgive me," he said, "I am the last who should add my burdens to yours. I ought rather to have emulated your heroism, and borne them as you have done." He turned away, and walked to the church. The door of the cold, damp, unused, little edifice was open, and he gazed vacantly on the tall, rough, old wooden cross above the communion-table. Ann sat on, lost in a tumult of sorrow and dismay, unconscious of the child, busily engaged in ruthlessly destroying the long necklace of daisies which Ann had threaded for her. Presently Philip came back, dropping quietly down into his old seat. They neither of them spoke at first, but the strong man had conquered. Lord Redenham's face had resumed its usual self-possessed look.

"Philip," Ann said at last, "I always thought you so happy in Ethel's love; I never even dreamed of this."

"We were," he replied, "at first; even Ethel admits it. But not since our return from abroad. How we have failed, or why, God only knows."

"O Philip," Ann exclaimed earnestly, "Ethel's love is far too precious to be lightly abandoned. Good and true and loving, I am sure she is. Can nothing be done to disperse this dark cloud?"

Philip shook his head. "I thought perhaps it was the sympathy of her own people she pined for," he replied sadly, "and, as you know, I sent her to her mother when you were with us. But it has not remedied it. You can see her unhappiness in her face."

"Then you must bring her people to her. She was very young and very timid when she married. You brought her among strangers, and we are all cold and reserved and proud. It was a new world to her, and she could not comprehend us. I feared as much then; I see it all now. We should have opened our hearts to the young stranger, and made her one of ourselves. Then, remember, you are so engaged in your public duties it throws her entirely on herself."

"If all public men are equally unhappy in their domestic relations, God help them!" Philip replied petulantly. "Neither name nor fame will ever remunerate a man for such a sacrifice."

"Ethelind is too young, too inexperienced in the ways of the world, to enter as some women do with a man's enthusiasm, and more than a man's zeal, into the high holy aspirations which form the moving spring of great men's actions. She only sees you now devoting your time and talents to your country, and she grows jealous over what she believes should be exclusively her own. In time she will grow wiser, and learn to be as proud of you as we all are,—as I am."

"You would never have been jealous of me, Ann," he exclaimed vehemently. "Think what a help your courage and council would have been to me. There are times when a man needs comfort and encouragement in the arduous toils of a public life. He craves for sympathy and assistance, just as a thirsty traveller craves for water in the hot desert."

"And do not women, think you, crave also for sympathy in those domestic cares which men despise and laugh at, but which are as arduous and wearing to a young thing like Ethel as your larger sphere of duties is to you? Believe me, whatever you require in a wife, Ethel is fully capable of giving you, Philip; but the gifts, be they great or small, must be reciprocal."

Philip heaved a deep sigh. "Ann," he said, "it is good of you to plead so heartily for Ethelind. I, of all people, have no right to darken your lot with my grievances; I wish I could learn to bear them as bravely as you have done your own."

Ann put out her thin hand on the small iron cross which rests upon a gravestone in that little churchyard. "Yes, the shadow of the cross has fallen on me," she said slowly; "but as the day creeps on, so the shadow lessens." She rose up to go away. "Come, busy bee," she added, "it is time you and I were moving." She stooped down to tie on the child's sun-bonnet, and gather up the scattered daisies into her little basket. Philip laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Ann," he said very earnestly, "if any one can help us, it is you. Will you come to us this autumn, at Redenham? I know what I am asking; but for Ethel's sake, for my child's sake, do not deny me." Ann's fallow face flushed, and then faded back to a deadly white. "Never mind," Philip said hastily, "I know you will do so if you can; but do not promise."

"Yes, Philip," she said at last, in a low voice, "if Ethel asks me, I will."

"God bless you," Philip replied heartily; and seizing his child, he kissed her warm little cheek. "I must go now," he said hurriedly, looking at his watch, "or I shall miss the last boat;" and a moment after he had disappeared beyond the churchyard-gate.

Barbara told Ann Philip's fly had been waiting for him more than

twenty minutes. She had no patience with young nervous wives, who would neither leave home themselves nor give their husbands a moment's peace out of their sight.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AFTER Lady Redenham's visit to Brighton an irrepressible longing took possession of Mrs. Atherton to return to Wylminstre; and she and Margaret, at the special desire of John Waldron and his sister, took up their residence in the unoccupied rooms of the old house in Acre Lane.

It was far on in spring, and so suddenly as to take even those about her by surprise, that Mrs. Atherton passed away; even Ralph could not be summoned in time. Of their scattered family, Ralph and Margaret could only follow their mother, and lay her beside their father's grave in the gray old cathedral-cloisters: for Grace was at Naples, and Ethelind, from whom the intelligence had as yet been studiously kept, was lying ill at Redenham, with the long-coveted one-week-old heir sleeping in his little cot beside her.

Margaret turned away from the dead to think and act for the living; for her uncle was gradually becoming more feeble, and Ralph was looking careworn, and gray hairs were prematurely visible in his brown curly hair.

The rector of Grafton was dead, and the curate, who in his two years' residence had done so much for the parish, had again to search for a home, with the additional care of a delicate wife and two little infants to provide for. The mastership of the grammar-school at Fairleigh was vacant, and Margaret and her brother, as soon as Mrs. Atherton's funeral was concluded, went there to reconnoitre. Katie, in her lonely parsonage, read and re-read Margaret's graphic description of the old school-house and its curious tumble-down old chapel, until she almost fancied she could see it; and discussed all the pros and cons with their eccentric old neighbour Mr. Owen, who had taken an intense interest in the energetic young curate and his bright hopeful little wife. After a sharp contest, Ralph came out the successful competitor; and, fetching Katie from Grafton, with Margaret to assist, the old school-house soon grew into something like decent order. Fond as Margaret was of children, she became at last quite enthusiastic over the long rows of little curtainless beds, with their white coverlets showing so distinctly against the dark wainscoted walls and the high Gothic windows, through which the morning sun shone down so cheerfully on the rosy faces beneath. There was something, too, quite awe-inspiring in the large gloomy school-room, where, on a raised dais, Ralph sat enthroned in his high-backed chair in the imposing dignity of cap and gown.

Leaving Susannah to assist Katie in her nursery, Margaret returned to Wylminstre, where her uncle's increasing weakness rendered her presence needful to him and to her aunt.

Dr. Harford had finished his round of patient-seeing, and was sitting beside his wife's work-table with the newspaper in his hand.

"John Waldron told me to-day," he said, "that Charles Sedgeley has proposed again, and Margaret Atherton has refused him."

"Poor fellow! and after so many years' constancy. Margaret is no longer a girl. If she does not take care, she will end in being an old maid, like her aunt Sarah."

"There are few men worthy of Margaret Atherton," the doctor replied. "I never met with any one like her. How invaluable she is to her family! By the way, I wonder what has become of young Vyvian? One hears nothing of him now."

"He was here a year or so ago," Mrs. Harford said; "for I remember both John and Sarah Waldron saw him. She can hardly be keeping single for his sake. Constancy and true love are well enough, but even a virtue may be exaggerated. Besides, he used her very badly."

"I suppose, from all I hear, he was awfully passionate and hot-headed; and her father and brother must have thought so, or they would not so entirely have broken with him, after his having for years been like one of the family."

"Margaret had from a child a marvellous influence over him. A word or look from her could check or control him instantly. When his regiment went to India, the Dean would not allow any formal engagement, though to all intents and purposes they were so. I think, much as he liked him, he had not quite sufficient confidence to trust his favourite child with him; besides, they were both very young. The sudden death of his uncle brought him back unexpectedly to England, to look after the property to which he was heir-at-law. He had heard rumours that Margaret was engaged to Charles Sedgeley. So he posted off to Wylminstre directly after his arrival, and met Sedgeley coming out of the Deanery. He begged hard to see Miss Atherton alone. What followed I cannot tell, for it was kept a profound secret by them all; but from that day to this Guy Vyvian, I know, has had nothing to do with the Athertons."

"For my part," Mrs. Harford added, "I must say I pity poor Charles Sedgeley; and I think Margaret would show her good sense if she forgot all about this boy-and-girl love, and rewarded him for his long-tried constancy."

Spring and the bright summer's sun stole over the loving watchers by the sick-bed of John Waldron, and then no further anxiety harassed them on his account. The active yet peaceful tenor of his life had closed in as quiet and peaceful a death-bed. Crowds followed him to his grave—his own large circle of friends, besides the rich and poor of Wylminstre, each anxious to testify their respect and sorrow. Sarah Waldron would deny no one; and Ralph and Margaret supported their aunt as she followed the unpalpable coffin to the little graveyard, which almost bordered the orchard at the bottom of the garden in Acre Lane.

A pin's fall might have been heard as that large motley assembly gathered round the open grave. Margaret almost started as the clear, soft, and not unmusical notes of a woman's voice broke the stillness, in earnest supplication for all present. Reverently every hat was lifted until the voice ceased, and the crowd turned away to the small gloomy chapel adjoining, where Margaret and her brother listened impatiently to the strange disjointed addresses which occasionally broke the stillness of that long hour's exercise. By Mr. Waldron's will his property, after amply providing for his sister, so as to insure a continuance of many of his charities, was to be equally divided between Ralph and Margaret, and which, if it did not constitute a fortune, was at least enough to enable Margaret liberally to assist Grace and Frank, and to set Ralph's mind at ease in the maintenance of his increasing family.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DURING the following two years, diversified occasionally by visits to Fairleigh, assisting Ralph in his favourite project,—the restoration of the old chapel,—Margaret's home was with her aunt Sarah in Acre Lane. Twice she had found her way to Deighton; once to assist Mr. Weldon in meeting the difficulty of overflowing numbers in his school. Margaret suggested a trained master to assist them.

Mr. Weldon shook his head. "He will set us all to rights. Rachel Grey will stand no chance. He will new-fangle all our old-fashioned schemes, and turn the school topsy-turvy."

Margaret could suggest no other solution of their difficulty. Little boys had grown into young men; the night-school overflowed. It was clear that it had outgrown Rachel Grey entirely.

Before quitting Deighton, Margaret had carried her point, and had seen the master himself installed under the vicarage roof, and coöperating very harmoniously with Rachel in the daily work. Six months later, Margaret was again a guest of the vicar; but this time it was to be present at the marriage of the grave sedate Rachel Grey to the clever, merry, light-hearted trained master, who had won the hearts of his pupils, and the staid quiet schoolmistress into the bargain.

Margaret was rich enough now to keep her own little pony-carriage, in which she could drive about the neighbourhood with her aunt, who would never have consented to such a luxury on her own account.

"Aunt Sarah," Margaret said, slackening the speed of her ponies as they crested the summit of a green hill on the bright breezy downs which surrounded the old city, "I had a note from Ethelind this afternoon. She and Philip wish me to pay them a visit in town. It is the first time she has asked any of us; and though I am not much used to a gay London life, I should not like to refuse. So when you go up to the yearly meeting, I must go with you."

A pleasant smile played over aunt Sarah's face. "I am very glad

to hear it," she said. "I dare say that dear child needs thee. Margaret, thou must go."

"Then, too, I had a long letter from Grace, written in such capital spirits. They had fallen in several times abroad with Mrs. Leigh and her daughter, who are just returned to England, and with a Lord Redcar, who is a great friend of the Redenhams; and she had again met Mr. Chudleigh, the nephew of Mr. Weldon, with whom she made acquaintance at Deighton."

"And does she say nothing of returning home? I am old-fashioned and English; and I should not wish that dear child to marry a foreigner."

Margaret laughed. "We have not much to fear on the score of foreigners, aunt," she said. "In spite of her four years' residence abroad, Gracie's sympathies are English; and if there is truth in these rumours of wars, the Aylmers must of necessity return home."

Aunt Sarah heaved a deep sigh. Margaret could not see her face, hidden as it was in the depths of her dark drab bonnet; but the grave sadness of her voice almost startled her niece.

"I could wish, then, that, like thy uncle's, my race had run out, Margaret, dear child; then, I do think, even I should feel thankful that thy engagement with Guy Vyvian had never been renewed."

The lash of her whip fell with unusual violence across the backs of Miss Atherton's spirited little ponies, and the next minute they were cantering along the smooth turf on the brow of the hill, until they broke into the high road to Wylminstre.

Leaving her aunt at her friend Miss Wilkins's, at Wandsworth, Margaret accepted that lady's offered carriage, and drove to Belgrave Square. Most joyfully Lady Redenham welcomed Margaret, and listened to the latest news of Grace and Ralph.

"I hope my old-fashioned dressmaker at Wylminstre will not shock you," Margaret said, as she and her sister watched Valerie unfolding the new dresses which had made aunt Sarah and Old Betty hold up their hands in astonishment. "I would not willingly call up a remark that your sister, Ethie, was too antediluvian for Belgravia."

"As if that could happen!" Ethel replied. "As if, so quiet and good as your taste is, it could ever be *outré* or Gothic. As to ornaments, Valerie has an unlimited order to supply you from my store."

Margaret smiled. "Aunt Sarah always impressed on me," she said, "that 'a meek and quiet spirit' was a woman's best ornament. If I do not possess that, I certainly have few others."

Ethelind's eyes fell, as Margaret spoke, on an old-fashioned ring with a quaint device of two hands locked over a single and very bright ruby of unusual size. "Oh, Maggie," she said, "how well I remember that ring! Years and years ago, as long back almost as I can remember! But surely," and she looked more closely, "there used to be a little pendant? What has become of the heart, Maggie?"

A faint colour spread over Margaret's cheeks. "I don't know," she replied hurriedly; "I lost the heart, I think, a long time ago."

"Well, never mind; it will be hard if we cannot find you a better in all London. But hark! that is the dressing-bell. I leave Valerie with you, and I will return and take you down-stairs myself."

The two sisters descended to the drawing-room; Margaret in her silver-gray silk and black lace, its folds sweeping down in one unbroken line from her waist to the floor, and Ethie's more youthful-looking figure in a gossamer dress of light blue, with many flounces, her brown curls drawn up into a gold net set round with coins, and necklace and bracelets to correspond.

"I must tell you Ann Leigh is here," Ethel said, as they descended the stairs. "She came to us this morning. Barbara and her mother dine with us. Lady Gwynne, too, is staying here. She once saw Grace, now I want her to see you. Ann does not appear until after dinner;" and then, with a quiet dignity, she formally introduced Margaret to her guests.

Barbara was as much struck by Margaret as Ethel meant her to be. She came forward and said frankly no introduction was necessary; she perfectly remembered Miss Atherton, even if she had not heard so much of her from her friend Mr. Chudleigh. Presently Philip had come up to where she was sitting, and, taking her cordially by both her hands, he gave her such a hearty greeting, she could not doubt for a moment the invitation had been as sincerely given.

"I saw at once by Ethel's face you had come," he said. "Your visit will do her good; she needs some of her own people to bring back the 'old self' which we all like to remember, though she will not own to any change."

"Time changes us all," Margaret replied. "It has greatly improved Ethel's appearance since I saw her at Brighton. She is grown stout, and looks so remarkably well and matronly."

"Is Ann Leigh come, Ethelind?" and Philip laid his hand on his wife's arm. "No one told me. And Queenie, is she here too, and I not know it?"

"You could have done so if you had inquired," Ethel replied. "She came early, and is resting; the children have been with her all the afternoon; they are to be here when we leave the dining-room, for Margaret to make Leigh's acquaintance." Then she turned towards her sister.

"I have brought a gentleman, dear," she said in quite a different tone, "who is most anxious for an introduction. It seems, from his account, you are already old friends, in all but personal acquaintance;" and she formally introduced Horace Chudleigh and Margaret to each other.

Horace Chudleigh took Margaret in to dinner, and, seated between him and Lord Redenham, with Lady Gwynne opposite, it was impossible that conversation should flag; besides, Mr. Chudleigh had just returned from Deighton, and Margaret gladly availed herself of this opportunity of learning particulars of all her old friends.

Ethelind linked her arm in Margaret's as they left the dining-room. "The children are in the drawing-room," she said; "I long to show you my boy."

On the hearth-rug sat a splendid child, not quite four years old, though you might have mistaken him for five or six, his bright golden curls falling in heavy masses on his broad fair shoulders, and his dimpled arms half buried in the long silky coat of a small white Scotch terrier he was intent on teaching to beg for the morsels of biscuit he was doling out to it.

Half reclining on a low couch sat the invalid Ann Leigh, and by her side, busy amidst bits of coloured-silk patchwork, nestled the transparent fairy, little Beatrice, so absorbed in her employment, that only now and then you caught a glimpse of her large violet eyes, half hidden in their thick lashes.

"Look, cousin Ann! Look, Queenie, look!" the little fellow exclaimed, his dark eyes—so much darker than his hair—flashing with delight. "Aunt Barbara said I never should make Flossie beg; but I knew I should, and I have done it." Margaret stooped down to him. He blushed, looked in her face, and then, throwing his arms round her neck, said, with a proud little air, "You must be my aunt Margaret mamma tells me about. I think I shall love you, you are so like my mamma."

Miss Leigh put aside the children and rose to meet her. "This is a pleasure I have long desired," she said, as she shook hands with her warmly, while Ethelind passed on to her other guests. Barbara came up to Margaret.

"Is not Leigh a splendid child?" she said. "Did you ever see such eyes? Real Leigh eyes. You should see him in a passion. There is nothing I enjoy more than putting him in a passion. Ethel dotes on him. It seems as if all her love had centred in that child."

"Not more than in the delicate wan little Beatrice, who looks as if a puff of wind would blow her away."

"Ethel cares no more for Beatrice than if she had never belonged to her. Philip is as ridiculous in his way about her as Ethel is with Leigh. Such a fuss as he and Ann make together over her! One can excuse it in Ann, poor thing, with all her trials and disappointments, and the child is now, I suppose, given up to her keeping."

When the gentlemen came in, Margaret watched Philip go at once to Ann's sofa. The colour flitted nervously over Ann's face; Philip took his little girl in his arms, and bent down over her in confidential chat with his cousin.

Margaret turned to look for Ethelind. She was beside an ottoman, on which little Leigh had climbed, to whisper some secret request. Her arm was clasping him, and his fair round cheek was pressed against hers, as he tried on tip-toe to reach her ear. Ethel was watching the meeting of the cousins. A bright hot spot burnt on her cheeks, and a fire-flash

almost changed the colour of her violet eyes. Then suddenly stooping, she hid her face in her boy's neck, and almost deluged him with a flood of kisses. When Margaret looked for her a few minutes later, she was talking quietly to Horace Chudleigh in a distant corner.

"Ann tells me you have made acquaintance with your niece, Miss Atherton," Philip said, coming across to Margaret. "She has grown since you saw her last at Redenham. Do you not think her very like her mother?"

"As like Ethel as Lord Leigh is like yourself," Margaret replied.

"Ethel will not allow it."

"Does Beatrice live entirely with your cousin?"

"She has for some time now. She was weak and delicate, and Ethel cared so little about it, that when Ann offered to take her, I could not well object. The arrangement was at first temporary, but it has now become permanent. To remove her would, I fear, distress Ann. If the step ever becomes needful, Ethel must do it."

"It is scarcely wise," Margaret said, "to separate a mother from her child; but I do not think Ethel would act unkindly towards Miss Leigh."

"Ethel is changed, Miss Atherton, since you knew her," Philip replied thoughtfully; "I can't tell you in what way, but you cannot be here long and not see—not feel it."

Barbara came back to her old seat. "Of course I am bound to believe you have never met Mr. Chudleigh before, Miss Atherton; but it must, I suppose, be a case of love at first sight. When we were at Rome, in the spring, I used to accuse him of being smitten with your pretty sister Grace—who, by the way, is an arrant flirt; but the fit was nothing compared to what he is going through to-night on your account."

"The only flirtation I incline to," Margaret replied, "is with my splendid little nephew."

"And he, and Ann, and little Bee, are all gone off to bed: I met Ethelind taking them away."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"COME, Maggie, those children have plagued you enough for one day. The carriage will be at the door in ten minutes, and as I have set my heart on having you presented at this next drawing-room, it is time to set about the needful preparation for your dress."

"But, Ethie dear—"

"Now I know exactly what you are going to say, and I am quite determined not to listen. If you are afraid of the lecture Miss Waldron will read you, I will write a note, and ask her to come and see you when you are dressed; I know she won't refuse me."

Margaret laughed. "I have given myself up entirely to you while

I am here; so, of course, I cannot refuse any reasonable request; the only question is, whether this is so or not."

"Of course it is! and, as even aunt Sarah would, under similar circumstances, feel called on to afford herself a new drab-silk dress and mob-cap, there can be no reason why you should not do as other people do, when they are brought into the presence of majesty. I will promise you it shall all be as simple and plain as it is possible on such an occasion.

"Then,—let me see," Ethelind said, as she followed her sister into the carriage,—“there is my ball on the 30th, and our *fête champêtre* at Twickenham on the 5th."

"Be merciful, I entreat," Margaret exclaimed. "Remember I am but a poor simple countrywoman, quite unused to the gaieties of a London life."

Margaret laughed heartily at Lady Redenham's large acquaintance, as they drove home through the Park. Margaret sat back gently in the corner of the britzka, a silent spectator, except when Mr. Chudleigh joined them; and, as he persisted in cantering by Margaret's side, she could not resist joining in the conversation.

"You have heard the news, Miss Atherton, I dare say? It has been just received at the Horse Guards; Sebastopol must be ours soon, if only they can send reinforcements in time. Lady Redenham, you won't have his lordship at dinner; there is a Cabinet Council this afternoon, and the House is to meet early."

"No matter," Ethelind replied. "I take my sister to the Opera this evening to hear the new *prima donna*: Mr. Chudleigh, will you dine with us, and be our escort?"

And to judge by the expression of Horace Chudleigh's usually sedate face, it did not seem that Barbara Leigh's quick-sightedness had misled her when she declared he had already lost his heart to his uncle's charming friend.

Philip was at home when they returned. He had been lured back by the desire to have a game of play with his little girl. "Miss Atherton, has Ethelind victimised you in her passion for the Opera. Take care she does not wear you out with her own late hours," he said.

"You are careful of Margaret, Philip, for which she cannot feel so grateful as I do; but in this case it is unnecessary. I will take all care of her, while you look after Ann. We do not expect you to accompany us: Horace Chudleigh will dine and go with us."

"Chudleigh will have enough to do then," Lord Redenham replied. "To-night there is sure to be a crowd." He turned, and took his little girl in his arms.

Ethel watched them a moment, and then said, "It is but a cruel kindness in you and Ann to pet and spoil that child as you are doing, especially with such a morbid disposition as hers."

"And are boys none the worse for spoiling?" Philip asked, as he watched Ethel's flushed face.

"That is the old story. You tell me I spoil Leigh, and shall make a tyrant of him. I deny it. Arthur is too independent and high-spirited to be spoiled, even if I were inclined to do so. Now, Margaret, you are a comparative stranger; we will make you umpire in this knotty question. After you have been here a month, you shall say honestly (and you are by no means a bad judge) whether Leigh or Queenie is the most spoiled, and at whose door the evil lies heaviest; and, granting even the possibility of a verdict against my boy, whether the excuse is greatest in Philip, who has a mother, sisters, cousin, all the world, to claim his affection, or myself, with only my boy."

"I shall make no promise of the sort, Ethie," Margaret replied. "What mother ever allowed she spoiled her child, though all the world accused her of it, and could see it in every thing she did? Miss Leigh will not let Queenie suffer from over-indulgence, even if her papa is caught occasionally yielding to the temptation; and as to you, Ethie,—spoiled as I fear you were by us all, and feeling its effects now,—I believe you will see the necessity for shielding your high-spirited Leigh from a similar misfortune. It is bad enough for a girl, it is worse in its effects on a boy, especially in the responsible position your child will fill." As she spoke little Arthur's bright face appeared at the door. He rushed half-way across the room, and then suddenly stopped.

"Come here, sir; I want you," Lord Redenham said.

"I don't want you, papa; I want mamma," the boy replied, with a careless toss of his bright curly head.

"Do you hear what I say, sir? Come directly, when I bid you!" The boy's eyes flashed, and the bright colour came up into his little determined face.

"I want mamma," he said firmly; and climbing up into a chair beside her, he threw his little arms round her neck, and stood looking proudly and defiantly at his father, while he whispered some childish request in her ear.

A conscious feeling of conviction crossed Ethelind's heart. "You should do what papa bids you, darling," she said. "Go to him, Leigh, and never mind me." The boy saw the tears gathering in her eyes, though she strove to hide them by bending down over his curls.

"Never mind, mamma," he whispered again, but loud enough this time for Lord Redenham to hear. "Nobody loves you as I love you;" and he half-smothered her with kisses.

Philip laid his hand on his boy's round shoulder. "It is time, young gentleman, I took you in hand myself. When I call you, you must attend. Do you hear what I say?" Again the two pairs of Leigh eyes met; but the boy's never flinched.

"When I have kissed my mamma, and told her my secret, I shall come to you, papa; but I must go to mamma first. My godpapa told me, when he went away, always to go to mamma first, and attend to her first, and love her first, and never care what any body said to me for it,

not even if they made me cry afterwards; and I told him I would. You may scold me as much as ever you like, I shall still go to mamma first."

Philip's hand relaxed, and he let the boy go. "Between Redcar and your mother you are incorrigible," he said; but he spoke in a tone which showed his brave determined boy had touched him in his most sensitive part. Redcar,—all the world perhaps,—even his own child, could see that its mother needed 'protection,'—and from whom? His eyes fell upon Ann. Margaret had caught up little Beatrice, and was playing with her at the farther end of the room. Ethelind did not speak; she saw the look, and read, or fancied she did, all it meant to convey. She loosened her hold of her child; a quick sharp retort was upon her lips, but with a violent effort she repressed it; it curled and quivered for an instant, and the hot blood went back upon her heart. The next, and she had quitted the room, her boy tightly grasped in her hand.

Philip looked after her for a second, then he heaved a deep heavy sigh, which welled up from the bottom of his heart. He rang the bell, and ordered his carriage. "Good by, Miss Atherton," he said; "I do not dine at home to-day. It would have been wiser, perhaps, if I had not let Queenie wile me back now." The next minute he was gone.

Cold at Frascati.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN'S WIFE."

It is the Café Nuovo in Rome. We are four Englishmen, come to breakfast under a roof of trellised lemon-trees, that are dropping their blossoms—their inexpressibly fragrant blossoms—about us.

Some broad steps lead down into a garden with yellow sanded paths, shrubs, and statues. In a grotto at the farther end a fountain plays, with large-leaved water-plants that mantle the moist brown stones with their intense green. To the left a lofty wall is overtopped by the brick middle-age tower of the church of San Lorenzo in Lucina, a stone's-throw off. Beside a great iron gate in this wall grows, nearly to the top of it, an enormous oleander, coming into bloom.

With one exception, myself, these Englishmen belong to the regular artist crew of Rome. We are expecting a fifth personage, waiting breakfast for him, and talking about him.

"He has settled down in Spivey's old studio," says Slabber, "and has painted two pictures already. Intends to cut us all out, of course."

"But he's not a professional artist," Briggs hastens to observe; "he's not one of us, you know. Harford's quite a gentleman; he don't *sell* his pictures."

"Bedad," cries poor Flanigan, "I'm a gentleman too! I don't sell mine!"

"Harford is not obliged to be a professional artist," I put in; "but he is studying art quite seriously. He is no *flâneur*, I assure you—"

"Flan be hanged!" grunts Slabber, that big Anglo-Saxon cockney: "why can't you speak Henglish?"

"Why can't *you*?" I say, and getting up, I stroll to the fountain at the end of the garden.

Coming back, I find that headlong gossip, Flanigan, tumbling out secondhand lies like diseased potatoes out of a sack.

"Flick knows all about Harford," says he. "He shot a man in a jewel about a garrul that was both of their sweethearts; and Flick says he's an ath'ist—don't b'lieve in God or divil, you know—and broke his father's heart; and all sorts."

"I wouldn't repeat such things," says cautious Briggs, "especially after Flick. Now, I was only told, quite in a general way, that Harford had got into a scrape about a woman, and didn't behave well to her. But I'm sure" (in a distinct voice) "Mr. Harford is a perfect gentleman, and I shall be delighted to improve our acquaintance."

At the very moment Mr. Briggs happens to make this gratifying remark, the subject of it walks through the house into the verandah.

He is a tall athletic young man, dressed in light summer clothes and

a wide-awake. His skin, although pale, is healthily tinted by the sun; his thick dark-brown hair and beard have reddish lights. He has a remarkable face, the features of which are so irregular that many people consider it ugly, but far too expressive really to deserve that epithet. You could not help being interested in the man, and watching him. You would find the childish festivity of a Roman carnival in his laughter, and, very often, the dismalness of a Puritan Sunday in his eyes. He apologises for being *en retard* (which, of course, disgusts Slabber),—he has been riding in the Campagna, his watch is slow, &c.

Harford is our host, and this is a farewell banquet to the last remnant of those bearded tribes that congregate in Rome every autumn, and disperse east, west, north, and south on the approach of summer.

That evening my brother John and his wife, Harford and I, made a flitting to Frascati, where we had arranged to spend all the summer together in a delicious villa.

I must now tell you that Frank Harford and I were old friends and schoolfellows. He was the only son of a retired Indian officer, who had settled down in the west-country parish of which my father was the pastor. When he died, the living was given to his brother, who had been his curate, and my mother continued to live in the village. Frank was two or three years older than myself, but that made his friendship for me all the tenderer, and mine for him reverential. Besides, I looked on Frank as a kind of genial young saint. I always felt rather wicked in his company, because he really seemed, quite naturally, never to do any thing wrong, or to have so much as a wrong thought. I used secretly to feel such a paltry, lying, selfish, cowardly little sneak beside this noble, tender, pure-hearted young fellow. How he loved and obeyed his horrid yellow old father, the tyrannical little major, and how I defied and cheated and grieved my most indulgent and gentle of mothers!

Harford would have chosen art as his profession, I knew, had he been allowed a voice in the arrangement of his own future; but the bilious old despot who ruled his destiny made a civil engineer of him, without the slightest reference to any possible fancy or protest of the lad's. Naturally, he did not take kindly to his work, though he buckled to it conscientiously.

But the city life in an office half broke his heart—chained there to the desk's dead wood, and pining like any young hawk for the wide sky, cliffs, moors, and tors.

When my mother died, and I went to live with John at Gosport, I did not lose sight of Frank. John used often to ask him down to stay a day or two with me, and when John and his wife took me to Italy for my health's sake, Frank and I kept up a pretty brisk correspondence for about a twelvemonth. But in our second Italian summer his letters suddenly ceased to arrive. I wrote to him in vain hope of answer for six months, and then let the correspondence go with a sigh.

We easily ascertained that he was alive and well, but could find out nothing else about him that was more reliable than the grotesque gossip retailed by Flanigan and Co. There had been certain English military men among the booby-birds that had flapped their lazy flight across the sea one winter, and perched in Rome; and that arch-gossip, Flick, had picked an acquaintance with them.

The wild scandal about poor Harford was to be traced to these warriors; that was all I could make of it.

But at last I heard from Frank himself once more. Lo! he had inherited a small fortune from a distant relation; he had thrown civil engineering overboard; he was coming to Rome forthwith to study art in earnest at last; and we must spend the ensuing summer in Villeggiatura together, eating figs at Tusculum. When the farewell breakfast took place, he had been about six weeks in Rome, and had already painted one or two capital little pictures.

No village in the world drives such a roaring trade in scandal as grand old Rome. You have seen how Harford's character went before him, as Sir Peter Teazle's stayed behind, for the comfort of the community, and what mercy it met with. Not that any body, even Briggs, means malice. Bless you! Slabber wouldn't hurt a fly, and Flanigan would help one out of a milk-jug. Now, when circumstances are served up in some singularly wry way of absurdity and untruth, there are generally certain facts which one may trace like pebbles through disturbing waves. I felt convinced that I should do so in Harford's case, if ever it pleased him to give me his confidence.

But I could not try to thrust myself into any chamber of his past not freely opened to me. I could not help guessing that there was a shut and locked door, behind which lurked the solution of a mystery. This mystery was the great and grievous change in my friend, not to be accounted for by the mere lapse of two or three years. And this change was all the more remarkable that it was not always obvious. No two men could be more unlike than Harford to Harford in different moods. It seemed to me as if much evil had flowed into his heart by some rent where much good had run out, but that the poison had never mixed with the healthy juice of his life.

Meantime we throve on figs. We renewed our old fellowship, and talked ourselves back into intimacy. We found each other capital company, and the best of friends. Some people make tolerable companions, but never friends. To become friends, there must be corresponding hooks and eyes. Some people have neither hooks or eyes about them. You find in them an utter want of compliance with your moods, a total absence of sympathy, inflexible denial of fellowship. They never will do any thing you want them to do with you, *ex improviso*, whether to take a walk, or sit and talk. They set themselves a fixed and fatal round of things to do and places to go, and they delight in beating that worn ring. You can see the methodicality of these folks in every thread of

their clothes, the cut of a man's whiskers, the sit of a woman's hair. How can one get on with such people? One never does get on with them: one stands still, or goes off without them.

And as to friendship, it is apt to be fatally exigent. Why must very sincere affection be of that fixed inalterable character which, it is pretended, always belongs to true love? Even the persons best known to you are, in a daily intimacy, continually turning up some new side of themselves, quite hid from you before. Is it possible that your affection for them can be invariable, and never in the least influenced by their behaviour? I believe not. Your affection for Jonathan, my dear David, and his for you, is as true as any love going, and, for what I know, passing the love of woman; but are you never to be annoyed by the imperfection of his temper? Are you never to put him in a rage by that habit you have of preaching to him? You may not like to confess it, but you know that you are often annoyed by him, and that you put him in a rage three times a week. And it's nonsense to say you love each other all the same, all the time. You don't. Your loves always come back; they are never far off; but they are actually gone for the moment. Not the less cherish your Jonathan, O David, that it can be but a human way of loving; cherish him living, and apostrophise him in poesy (if you can) when he dies!

For ah, old friends, how rare they be!—people who knew you, who grew into your fibre when your heart was young. As well attempt to replace an eye as these! The idea of a dead friend becomes to you that of some beautiful statue dashed to pieces. *Dead!* It takes years to comprehend so great a loss. A gem has dropped from your finger into the deep, and you gaze at the vacant setting.

One stormy September evening, Frank and I sat in his studio-window at Frascati, high over the rounded tops of woods, now lurid in the red setting sun. Beneath a leaden sky the gloomy Campagna stretched like a dead sea, and with its far rim cut the disc, a portentous blood-red ball, slowly, slowly sinking.

Harford had been uttering some very bad sentiments, which would have grieved me more if I had not attributed them in part to some unripe peaches and the state of his stomach.

"Harford," said I suddenly, "I've found a key to much that makes people gasp and stare at you."

"What do you mean?" returned he rather roughly.

"Most persons," I went on, "are half angel, half devil, they say. But your angel and devil seem to share their lodging on the most curious terms of mutual forbearance. They seem to take you turn and turn about, in watches, as it were. Your angel never torments your devil, or interferes with his mode of enjoying himself, his Walpurgis nights with his man; and your devil, with equal politeness, never intrudes himself on the angelical prayer-meetings. They could not possibly come in contact with-

out disturbing the harmony of the system; but they seem to agree to differ, like certain polite married couples."

Harford took his pipe from his mouth, and blew out a long smoke-wreath. Then he leaned head and shoulders out of the window, and stared far away at the sun, now like a clot of blood on the livid horizon, till even that crimson speck was absorbed. Then he brought himself back to his former position in a corner of the rickety old sofa, and from that dusky corner spake.

"You hooked a fine fat fish there, my young friend, with your moral-critical line. Your sagacity really deserves patting for having snuffed up such a good head of game. Still, you don't know how the devil got into me: how should you? He had hardly set claw on your friend when we were boys together, and I rather the better boy of the two."

"You may well say that, old fellow! At that time (and what a little while ago it is, after all!) you really seemed incapable of evil, or even of comprehending it. You trusted every body implicitly, because you yourself were—"

"An ass!" roared Harford. "And now listen."

So, as the night fell, and "the casement slowly grew a glimmering square" in the blackness, Harford's tale was told at Frascati.

"Fourteen months ago, I was lodging for the summer in a farmhouse in a village, no matter where. The only house there belonging to gentle-folks, except the wretched old parsonage, was Squire Ringwood's. It was a big stupid-looking mansion on a hill, staring down overbearingly at the poor little tenements huddled together below; and the burly squire himself was for all the world like his house, as he sat on his tall horse, and looked down pompously over his vast waistcoat at a frightened crew of village children. The squire had an ugly sickly wife and daughter, and they had a humble companion that was an angel of beauty. I fell in love with her at church; you recollect I used always to go to church. Oh, the little church in the west countrie, hid in the bowery orchard hollow! Oh, the sudden delicious gust that littered the graves with blossom!—your mother's grave, Charley; has the dear woman the violets I planted there? or did they die like the faith and hope she set in me? I fell in love with Fanny Vale before I knew her name; I learnt that from the farmhouse folks with whom I lodged. They told me, moreover, that she was a young widow, and still in weeds when she came to lodge very humbly in the village six months before; that the squire's wife and daughter had taken a fancy to her, and had adopted her into their family, as a kind of reader and useful companion of all work. I made her acquaintance by a note which I threw at her feet over a hedge the first time I spied her walking alone. I need not swear to you that I never had an evil wish or thought about her. To me a woman was a holy thing, desecrated by no lowness of condition, deserving of any gentleman's love and reverence if endowed with certain qualities. These qualities I now took on trust, and, being enchanted by her beauty, saw also

the perfection of moral loveliness in her face. Such an angelic face, Charley! There she sat in the squire's pew, beside her ugly patronesses, with such intelligence in her melancholy blue eye and fair half-moon of brow, such a breathing sensibility in her silence: and when I came to know her, what sympathy in her smile, what silken manners, so soft, graceful, caressing, yet modest and full of suave dignity! She did not answer my note; but when I went to the copse behind Ringwood house, where I had implored her to meet me, she was there. She came, she said, only to beg me to come, and write, no more. She was a poor dependent, and the least suspicion falling on her would cast her homeless and friendless on the world. I will not dwell on this stale love-story: it was perfectly common-place of its kind, except that the dupe was not, for once, the humble beauty, but the gentleman from London. She consented to be my wife; and at the summer's end, without asking her a single question as to her past, without knowing more of it than the farm folk had volunteered to tell me the first day I saw her, I brought this girl to London, to a respectable house, and thence married her. That's what came of being too good for this world, incapable of evil, or the comprehension of it. I had written to tell my father of my intended marriage to (I frankly confessed) a perfectly obscure and penniless young woman, that had of course every thing *but* position and wealth to recommend her. I wrote a respectful letter, which I received back in a blank cover. Yet my heart yearned to the cross-grained old man, and from the glory and joy of my fools' paradise I emerged voluntarily, before the honeymoon was over, to seek a reconciliation with my father.

"When I got to his door, he drove me away like a beggar, like a strange dog, with his lifted stick, with his mouth full of curses. That is the last I ever saw of him. He died, six months after, implacable.

"I hurried back to town, to be comforted by the angel in my house. I returned sooner than I was looked for. I opened the door by a latch-key, and went softly up-stairs to surprise my wife. It was about two in the afternoon. Our little drawing-room had folding doors, which were now ajar. No one was in the front room, but I heard—I heard my wife's voice in the other. I heard her voice and a man's—I had but to step forward, and I saw—"

It was quite dark by this time, and here the voice that had come out of Harford's black corner suddenly broke into an awful sob.

"Don't go on," said I, much distressed.

"Let me alone," gasped Harford savagely.

In less than a minute he resumed, steadily.

"I saw my wife with her arms round a man's neck. She was passionately entreating him not to leave her: he was trying to release himself. The next moment they saw me, and started apart. Then, instantly, my wife, that tender angel, flung herself at me like a wild cat. She did not scream, but through her shut teeth she said, 'I'll kill you, I'll kill you, if you touch him!' Her blue eyes glared much like yonder blue

lightning that keeps flashing out there, and something glittered close to my face. She had snatched up her scissors, and I verily believe would have dug them into my temple if her man, her lover, had not come and pulled down her hand. Then she fell into his arms again, kissing him before my face. He put her from him, not very gently, and told her to sit down. She obeyed him instantly. I cannot in the least describe my state of mind all this time, which was only a minute or two, I suppose. My impression is that I had ceased to feel; that if my brain and heart had been scooped out, I could not have been emptier of emotion and thought; that I was not conscious of any vindictive rage, or any transport of despair. Some people may think I ought to have kicked that man down-stairs. I neither did so, nor felt any desire to hurt him. It was he who took the initiative, and made me a sign to go into the front room with him, which I did. Then, when I stood there face to face with him, I said suddenly, and, as it were, involuntarily—

“‘Who are you?’

“‘I am sorry for you,’ said he, in a gentle drawl, looking at me quite compassionately; ‘this woman has treated you very badly. Still, you know, you have only yourself to thank. Your conduct has really been quite inconceivably rash, you know—’

“‘Who are you?’ I repeated, staring at him bluntly.

“‘I am Captain Edward Ringwood. This woman was my mistress a year before you first saw her. I assure you I knew nothing of your love-affair, or proposed marriage. If I had known in time, I should certainly have considered it my duty to warn you of the awful blunder you were making; not that I am responsible for the young woman’s character, which was pretty notorious before I met her. When I went abroad with my regiment, I did not leave her destitute; and then, it seems, she chose to go down and wriggle herself into my family. What her motive was, I can’t imagine. She is a most artful, dangerous person, that is clear. She saw my return to England in the papers yesterday, and sent me a note inviting me to come and see her at this address, which I did. I give you my word of honour I had not been here ten minutes when you made your appearance. She had just told me she was married, and this was your house; upon which I got up and wished her good-day.’

“By this time I had found myself unable to stand, and was sitting on the sofa with my head between my hands. When Captain Ringwood left off speaking, I looked up, meaning to say something, but forgot what it was, and only stared at him silently.

“He was a fair, slight young man, about thirty, with handsome thin features, and large light-brown whiskers. He stood there looking at me with the same good-natured concern in his face that he had expressed in words, in his fashionable affected way.

“At last I recollected what I had been going to say, and told him I wished to be left alone. He silently took out his card, laid it on the chimneypiece, and went out.

"I don't know how many hours I remained lying on the sofa, with my eyes shut, in that strange torpor; but it was night when I opened them, and found my wife standing by me. She had lighted the candles on the chimneypiece, and was stooping down over me. She started upright as my eyes opened, but she did not avoid them. She confronted me, arching back her nymph-like figure, and leaning one hand on a table behind her. I felt no emotion at sight of her, but looked at her as if she had been a picture. Her beauty was splendid. All her fair golden hair was turned off her white face in a sort of glittering aureola. Her great turkoi-blue eyes flared under slightly contracted brows; the nostrils of her delicate straight nose, and her infantine mouth, expressed rage and pain.

" 'I am glad you are awake,' said she, 'I want you to hear me say I hate you!'

" 'I don't care,' said I wearily. 'Go away.'

" Her face flamed out with the fury that was burning her heart.

" 'But you do care!' she cried; 'you shall care! I tell you I always laughed at you and despised you. I married you because I thought it would give me a chance of winning *him* back—such as I had to-day. I got into his family, and toadied them, and made myself their servant, only to hear of him, and to feel nearer him, and be where he had been—I love him so! I love no one else in the world—I never did. I would kill you, and a dozen like you, to save him from a finger-ache. I would rather a thousand times have a blow from him than a kiss from you—a hundred million times! When I think of him, and that you are between us, I hate you—I abhor you! How dare you smile at me? I'll kill you!'

"I was quite unconscious of smiling; but she darted at me, and struck at my throat. I caught her hand; this time she had a penknife in it, and I felt that she had pricked me. That instinctive act of self-defence roused me, and probably saved my wits as well as my life. When I had mastered her, and thrown the knife away, I held her hands in mine till she put down her face and bit them savagely. I tied her wrists with my pocket-handkerchief, and she sank panting on a chair. All of a sudden the unhappy creature burst out crying as if her heart was broken—as it well might be. I knew afterwards that Ringwood's cool rejection of her advances, and his positive refusal to receive her when she had followed him back to his lodgings some hours before, were at the bottom of that frenzy of vituperation, and that desperate behaviour towards me. She did not hate me, but was simply mad with pain, and raved and struck out in her delirium. I do not believe that she married me with those deliberately profligate intentions she avowed, but that she meant and wished to lead a new life, until the sight of Ringwood's name in the papers, and the knowledge of his propinquity, in my absence, revived her passion for him, in which her good resolutions burnt like straw. I released her hands, and brought water and put it to her lips; and when she was quiet through exhaustion, I advised her to lie down, and hoped she would go to sleep.

As I was leaving the room, she called me back in a low broken voice, and when I stood beside the sofa on which she lay, she joined her hands, and asked me with streaming eyes to forgive her. I did so, freely. Of course Ringwood was right. I had no one but myself to thank. My infatuation had been so monstrous, that I could no more complain of the consequences than a man, sober, can complain of the consequences of some drunken folly.

"As for that poor human flower, still so beautiful and fresh to the eye while so withered at its heart, a kind of gloomy rage seized me as I looked at her and thought of that selfish ruffian, unknown, who had torn off this bud to stick in his buttonhole for an hour, and cast into the kennel. Probably this fellow is living respected, and will die regretted.

"People seem to go on a curious principle with regard to one class of crimes. Evidently, by the way they behave to the chief actors in certain social tragedies, they consider the heavier (if not the only) blame to lie with the corrupted wife, the tempted daughter, not with the innocent wolf who leaps into the fold, the gay good-humoured man who tramples all laws, human and divine, to serve his accursed ends.

"In the morning I took Fanny away to a farmhouse in Kent, a place she knew of, and chose herself for a retreat. She was quiet and humble, and apparently broken-spirited. Before I left her, she insisted on telling me her miserable little history. She was the daughter of a poor Welsh clergyman, and seduced by an idle gentleman on a fishing tour. She cared little for him; he took advantage of her vanity rather than her love. He brought her to London.

"*'You see I don't deny,'* said she, at her story's end, *'that we poor girls are very ready to be led astray. But, then, why are we? I want to know why we are so unprincipled, so easily tempted, and have so little horror of vice? and how it comes that there are so many devil's instruments, unconverted heathens, going about to tempt us, in what is called a Christian land, with all its universities and churches and clergymen?'*

"But I will spare you poor Fanny's heterodoxies.

"She did not remain at that farmhouse a month; nor do I know whither she went, or where she has been, ever since.

"She wrote me a long letter to say she could not bear the dulness of her life, and the wearing pain of her own thoughts. She ended in something like these words: *'I have tried hard to be good. I have prayed on my knees till I was exhausted and stupid, and prayed nonsense. All in vain. To-day I am twenty-two; and I am going back, with open eyes, to the life I was cast upon, blindfold, at sixteen. That's what we are almost all driven to; not by poverty, not even by contumely, but just by the hopeless corruption of our own souls. But, bad as I am, I will never trouble you more. I do implore you to be sure of that, and to forget me, or think of me as dead.'*

"I am afraid to think of her at all. I made every possible effort to

trace her, quite in vain; and I suppose I could effect no good if I succeeded.

"That's all," added Harford, after a moment's pause; "and there's the history of your friend and the wife of his bosom; and if you still wonder how or when my devil got into me, I don't. I believe you love me enough to think he is not so black a devil as he is painted. I am not the kind of man in whose heart such a gash could be made, and heal, and leave no mark. For a long while this world seemed, and often does seem, really an Inferno; nothing but plunging and breaking one's heart in a swamp of suffering, with intervals of quiet from mere exhaustion and despair. O Charley, how I wished your mother had been alive! I wanted some kind woman, that was honest and pure, about me: we men all do in our dark hour. *Basta!*—let us go down to John and his wife, and the lamp. By Jove, what a flash! There's a mighty storm brewing, young fellow."

M. B.

In Loco Parentis.

I AM not aware that Mr. Carter's early life showed any leaning towards the Machiavellianism which has furnished me with this story. Educated at one of those "sacred nurseries of growing youth," where to detain a voter for ten minutes in conversation till the close of the poll disfranchises him as effectually as if he had been a rotten borough is considered a stroke of the highest art, he naturally followed the stream; but how account for his subsequent conversion? I never heard him speak of Ignatius Loyola or Father Liguori; indeed I believe him profoundly ignorant of their existence, or at least of their doctrines; nor do I give him credit for a deep study of Machiavelli's writings. Perhaps if I have the honour of addressing any gentleman who is a casuist, he will let me have his opinion on the case.

It shall be stated plainly and briefly for his guidance. Mr. Carter was a squire, or rather a country gentleman. His money was invested in other ways than in land; and he had taken a small house for a summer when twenty-three, which he had kept ever since, marrying, having a son, losing his wife, sending his son to school, having him home for the holidays, &c., and ever doubting where to move when the proprietor of the house gives him warning. This the proprietor is not likely to do, seeing that he gets a good rent, paid punctually, and that the village is so out of the way that he may wait a century for another tenant. Mr. Carter's son lives with him.

Village-life is well enough for those who have outlived action, but it is the worst thing to condemn a young gentleman to if you have any hopes of his future. You may consider country-life the best for all, on the grounds adopted by a leading-article writer as an apology for writing on fields when requested to write on gas-works, that "God made the country, and man made the town." If, however, you examine this aphorism, which of course you don't, before uttering it, you will find that, like the other thousand and one evasions of reasoning, it is of some merit as a popular saying, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy. If man made towns, so did man make villages, and, still more, country houses. Towns are a confession of men that they cannot live alone, but villages are an attempt at uniting the hermitage to the social circle, and so give you the disadvantages of both. It is a sort of excuse, not that one was needed, for the love into which Mr. Carter's son fell as soon as he came to reside with his father. Why excuse it? His father did just the same when he first came to the same village. He might have done worse, as many young men of his age would have done. Whether or no he might have done better is a point not to be considered by a practical historian, like the present one.

Although Tom Carter's love was not violent, it led nevertheless to

many desperate musings, occasional attempts at poetic composition, moon-light walks, and daylight pænings. One of these latter, chosen, as the best means of secret and quiet thought, under his father's window, was being noticed by that astute gentleman. His son's love having been the talk of half the village for three weeks, had just come to his ears, and thence to his eyes. So strange he had never noticed it before! At all events, Dr. Bibber had never noticed it, though his (Bibber's) daughter's return of his (Carter's) son's love was equally patent. It was now evident that mutual modesty, shyness rather, prevented both youth and maiden from confessing their own or detecting the other's love. It seemed true love; why should not he lend a hand to falsify the poet's hasty expression, and make it run smooth, by taking all obstacles out of the way? He had known so many instances of the converse of that proposition taking place,—true love running with remarkable smoothness. So as his son paced past the window for the thirteenth time (remember the number!), he flung the sash up and called him.

"Are you particularly engaged, Tom?"

"No," replied Tom, after some deliberation. He never answered hastily, this good young man, and he was afraid the numerous avocations of his life in an English village might suffer if he accepted another too rashly.

"I have a favour to ask you," resumed the father, leaning out of the window, and looking almost confused. "You may have noticed I seem preoccupied of late, disturbed, anxious?"

"I did not notice it," replied Tom, thinking he would keep a sharper eye on his father in future.

"The fact is, my dear boy—you will not accuse me of sacrificing your interests, or think me selfish?" The actor, not to be ashamed by his son's cordial grasp of the hand! "What do you think, Tom, of the family near us? Dr. Bibber,—if he only drank wine, you might call him Wine Bibber—ha! ha!—do you like him?"

Tom had pressed Dr. Bibber mentally to his heart sixteen times a day; but he merely replied in vague terms something about a warm friend, &c.,—true enough, if noise was warmth.

"A very friendly man indeed; I agree with you there. But what do you think of his daughter?"

Tom was quite as practised a dissembler as his father; what is more, he had prepared himself for the question ever since he fell in love, and had learned an answer to it by heart. "I think her a very lady-like and accomplished person."

"I am glad to hear so favourable an opinion," rejoined the father, who had expected hesitation and blushes. "Pretty, too?"

"Ye-e-s, for some tastes."

"You have not lost your heart to her, then, it seems?"

If Tom had but spoken the truth—why didn't he? If ever I write my proposed Essay on Truth, I will examine his motives for doing what

he would never have done had the matter regarded aught else but his personal feelings. He said flatly and plainly, "No," which was as good as ten yes's.

The father's brow cleared at once, and the son's clouded over at the sight. "You reassure me, my dear son," he said. "Had there been the slightest inclination on your part, as might well have been, and as I could not but suspect, I could never have spoken. As it is—will you go to Miss Bibber and ask her to marry me?" and then his feelings not allowing him to wait the answer, he shut down the window desperately, and hid himself from the eyes of men.

He was recalled in a moment by the shout of his son. "My dear father, I will go willingly for you. But would it not be better to go yourself? If you feel so deeply, would not she be more moved by your feelings than by a mere message from you?"

"My dear son, if I was your age I would go myself. But you must remember the difference between my age and hers, which would make a personal offer almost ridiculous. You will oblige me, won't you?"

The son thought it hard; but how could he excuse himself? He had professed utter indifference to the lady five minutes before; how could he go at once into the opposite extreme? So he walked there, with a new idea of the relentless destiny personified by the Greek poets, in whom he had not yet believed. But by the time he got to Dr. Bibber's neat cottage, he had made up his mind to sacrifice himself, a second Iphigenia, differing only in sex. Caroline Bibber was too pretty to live unmarried; if she could not be his wife, it would be a consolation to have her for his mother; better than that she should marry an utter stranger and depart from Toddenham to gladden other circles. Full of this feeling, he marched boldly in, and confronted Dr. Bibber reading Aristotle in the original to his daughter.

The period has at length arrived to give a sketch of the young lady. She had the great good fortune of being a brunette, and though inclining to such *embonpoint* as was naturally induced by country life, retained the gracefulness of figure and firmness of outline natural to darkness. The exquisite olive tint of her face had been entailed upon her, through fair-faced immediate ancestors, from the first known of the stock. Such for her appearance, necessarily more fascinating to admirers of the dark style than to the learned authorities on female beauty who decree fairness to be the chief excellence, forgetting the phlegm and flesh which so often attend it. Her education was that of a young lady, as were her accomplishments. I am afraid she could not discourse on taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses; but she had an accurate taste, had read two plays in Bowdler, and played the piano. In a word, she was one of the daughters of England.

This is not a love story, it is *Kabale ohne Liebe*. You will excuse my quoting a tongue as familiar to the English generally as their mother tongue; so much so that Mr. Buckle quotes pages of Kant in the original,

to the despair of Germans, who don't understand it. Even professed love-stories, one only excepted, are filled less with love than with the consequences of it. But in a professed love-story you are required to give at least one love-scene, which I don't mean to do. The young ladies who like to know how love is made are referred to another place. Why should they object? I am endeavouring to throw the gentle spell of female influence over the tale, as a publisher advised me to do if I wrote a novel; and I have given them in a description of the young lady, without its being wanted. So permit me to return to the father.

He was sitting in the library, and occasionally pacing up and down it, to concoct the rest of his plot. Like a chess-player, he had calculated all the probabilities, provided for every consequence, except his adversary's move. Most likely the young lady would refuse him; she did not deserve his son if she did not. The son, too, would be lukewarm at first in pleading a cause he could not have at heart, and would only be awakened to warmth by the refusal. He would then, in hope for himself, urge his father's claim, and be finally interrupted by her saying playfully, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" as is laid down for a similar case in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, whence the father had borrowed his scheme. The only objection to this was his son's being named Tom, not John; but a young lady of parts could easily surmount such an obstacle. This was far the most likely course; for the others, it was hardly worth while to think of them. If she accepted him, he could explain to his son. If she rejected him without accepting the son at the same time, he could get his son to propose for himself. And the young lady had only three courses,—to accept him, to reject him, or to take his son instead. Ah, Mr. Carter, you never heard a certain statesman speak, and you little know the strange power of three courses.

He was still indulging in these pleasing reflections when awakened from his reverie by a loud, hasty voice outside. "Oh, you needn't announce me to Mr. Carter, John, we are old friends,—or not exactly old friends, but we're going to be soon. There, you needn't open the door; I know all about it, or I shall know how all the doors open before long."

Mr. Carter sprang to his feet, and hastened towards the door, which was flung open in his face by Dr. Bibber with such force as to necessitate a spring backwards of six feet on the part of the host, to make the hinges crack, and to shoot the guest into the room as if he had been one of Louis Napoleon's last war-like inventions.

"How do you do, Carter? how do you do? Well, I hope; these east winds (are they east or south-west, by the way, I've not seen the barometer lately?) not knocked you up, as they used my poor old friend Admiral Jiffcock. He always said they were fatal to his constitution; and so they proved, for they blew him on a leeshore off the south coast, and he was wrecked, with all hands. This is your library, eh? Nice room, very,—don't know it yet, but I hope to some time. Reading any thing new lately? Do you get books from Mudie's or from Nixnewe's

here? I was just giving my daughter a treat out of one of the novels of the season—which was it?"

"Kingsley's," suggested Mr. Carter.

"No, I never read his, any of them,—neither *Esmond* nor *Never too Late to Mend*. I shall think of it presently, I dare say. By the by, that reminds me; your son came just as I was in the middle of a sentence; a very fine youth that of yours,—*Je vous en fais mes compliments—agréez l'assurance de ma haute considération*, as we used to say in France; long since I've been there though,—great changes, they say—Rue de Rivoli, rifled cannon,—he's a great man, that Emperor,—and they're not fit for liberty—mere gabblers; can't say a connected sentence, or think out a subject. Well, but your son came to me to speak to my daughter. I've left him with her now."

"To speak to your daughter! really, it was considerate of you to leave them together, Doctor."

"Well, I hope I am considerate, Carter—you'll excuse familiarity; but as it is so—greatly flattered by your proposal, I'm sure; it was for that I came on at once, and left him there. You're a widower; but that's no difference,—of course, if you had killed your wife, one wouldn't have liked it; but I never heard you did. And she can look after your son for you; boys like that ought to have some maternal bringing-up as well as paternal, it humanises men more. I attribute all my advantages that way to my mother living till I was forty, and keeping me virtually at home all the time I was at school, as they say Hannibal's—"

"Excuse my interrupting you, Doctor. Did my son speak to your daughter before you left them?"

"Yes, yes, of course. He conveyed your offer of marriage."

"While you were there?"

"Yes. He said, 'I wish to speak to Miss Bibber on business.' I said, 'Speak to her, if you like, my dear Tom,'—no, I didn't say that though; I called him Mr. Thomas Carter, not esquire, you know, till you die, or settle an estate on him, which is the same thing.—'You don't want to speak to her alone, do you? because in any thing else but business I shouldn't mind it.' Then he interrupted me short, rather rudely, I must say, and said, 'I don't know that you shouldn't hear what I have to say, Dr. Bibber. I come on my father's part to ask your daughter's hand in marriage.' 'For yourself?' asked I; and, would you believe it? both of them blushed—as if they had any thought of it! 'No, for him,' said he. And so I came here."

"May I ask you the result?"

"Did she accept you, you mean."

"Yes,—what your daughter said."

"Why, she didn't say a word. I at once said I felt greatly honoured and flattered, and that I should leave him with her while I took you her acceptance."

"But you say she said nothing."

"No; why should she? I told her, of course, she must accept you, and I should do so in her name. 'But,' I said, 'as women like to say No several times before saying Yes, I shall leave this boy with you for half an hour, during which you may shilly-shally to your heart's content, and then accept him. It is now half-past ten; you will say Yes precisely at eleven o'clock, and I shall be back five minutes after with Carter,'—no, I said Mr. Carter,—but that was only to her, and your son was standing by too."

"Then I may take it for granted my proposal is accepted?"

"Certainly you may, most certainly; and now let us proceed to business. When should the wedding come off, is the important question. I don't think it matters to her in the least,—it is merely between ourselves,—but possibly you may have a choice in the matter. I tell you fairly, I have none whatever, only I think the sooner the better; I never like these long delays. When do you say, then?"

"Would it not be better to wait before fixing any thing till I have her consent also?"

"What's the good of that? what's the good of that? She will accept at eleven; it will merely delay us an hour in settling. Come, come, let us set to at once; what do you say?"

"Have your strawberries suffered at all by the rain?"

"No, I thank you, very flourishing, fresh as roses. When I saw it was going to rain, you see, I sent out Bill the gardener at once to push them under their leaves if they were at all outside, and I owe their safety to that, I believe. You shall taste some at the wedding-breakfast. Shall we have it next week?"

"I think that would be rather hurrying it. What do you think of the ministry?"

Ladies and gentlemen, I will not inflict upon you a patchwork of opinions taken second-hand from the local paper, which took its opinions from the paper of the capital of the county, which took its opinions from a London weekly paper, which took its opinions from a daily paper, which took its opinions from—the devil said its opponents, the ministry said its supporters. Any how, these opinions had been filtered through so many filtering machines by the time they reached Dr. Bibber, that the ministry would have disowned them, and the other high personage would not have recognised them. After this discharge, he returned to the marriage.

"But come, Carter, let us have an arrangement; when shall it be?"

Mr. Carter felt driven up into a corner.

"Perhaps, Dr. Bibber, my sending to-day was somewhat premature, for I had not contemplated so speedy a marriage, and, in fact, I was desirous of sounding, to some extent, the young lady's inclinations. I have, perhaps, been too hasty in sending,—my son has, perhaps, been too hasty in speaking,—you have, perhaps, been too hasty in accepting. I should like, if possible, to let the matter develop itself somewhat more naturally; and, till then, shall we let it rest here? Perhaps your daugh-

ter's feelings may be outraged; perhaps she has some other lover; perhaps she doesn't care for me."

If there was one thing Dr. Bibber hated it was "three courses," and the reader may have perceived Mr. Carter's fondness for them. There is a class of people who, not content with dividing the chances into yes or no, add a third chance, neither yes nor no; and these greatly confuse those clear-headed people who can see no farther than yes or no, though they may say both together.

"My dear sir," said the Doctor, "when I was made D.C.L.—"

How was Dr. Bibber made D.C.L.? One of the Universities wanted to make a batch during a stagnant time. There were no heroes at hand to be snapped up, so they took the most brilliant man of letters of the age, and set him in a frame of a retired rear-admiral; a sixth-class diplomatist, and three nobodies, one of whom was Dr. (then Mr.) Bibber. And so Bibber gained the rank of Doctor, and was alternately taken to be a retired London physician whose sands of life had nearly run out, a bishop on a pension, or a deaf Mus. Doc. To resume.

"When I was made D.C.L., I was taught that an evasive answer means more than it conveys. Is there any thing behind this desire of delay? Is there desire of rupture? If so, your repentance has been very speedy. But had it been speedier still, I could not have listened to it. It is my duty to my daughter to hold you to your promise."

"You consider promises sacred, then, Dr. Bibber?"

"Mr. Carter, I do."

"Then pray listen for one moment. I had scarcely sent my son off to you when my eye fell on this picture. That was my wife. And I then remembered that on her death-bed" (no invention here, reader) "she had exacted a promise from me that I would never take another in her place."

"Well, Mr. Carter, death-bed promises are doubly sacred, and there is no doubt you should keep that."

"I knew you would say so, my dear Dr. Bibber, and I thank you for your—"

"But as I don't see how you can keep that promise to her and this to my daughter at the same time,—whether you keep your promise to your wife or not, you must keep your promise to my daughter. If you break it to your wife, that is between you and her; but if you do to my daughter, there are legal remedies to which I shall apply."

"There is one thing, Dr. Bibber, about the sacredness of a promise—"

"To the dead, Mr. Carter, a promise is sacred, I grant. But to the living it is not only sacred, but binding."

"I mean I only made an offer to your daughter, not a promise."

"A quibble, sir, a detestable quibble. The law will decide whether it is a promise or an offer, whether an offer is not the same as a promise. I shall go at once and arrange an action. Good morning, sir."

But as he walked to the door it was suddenly thrown open, and in came the ambassador with a hasty "She has declined."

"Nonsense," said Dr. Bibber, turning round with importance, "I shall bring her to her senses. Mr. Carter, I hold you to your promise, and if when she comes here with me in a quarter of an hour to accept your offer you reiterate your refusal, I shall instruct my attorney to bring an action."

He sallied out pompously, preceded by his stomach, as a French writer has it, this time without any instructions to the servant. The son turned to his father for an explanation, and the father turned to his son for an account.

"On what ground did she decline? Did she give any reason?"

"She did not want her father to settle it for her, and she had never thought of you; not that she objected at all. But what was Dr. Bibber saying? had you declined her also?"

"My dear boy, you can, if you choose, do me a great service. After you were gone, I recollected that I had made a promise to my wife, your mother, not to marry again. Such a promise of course I cannot break. While I was thinking what I could do, Dr. Bibber burst in, and, in spite of all my efforts to postpone any settlement, or to turn his attention to other things, he wanted to have the marriage next week. He saw by my hesitation there was something wrong, and I had to tell him of the promise I had made; whereupon he threatened me with an action unless I broke a promise I must consider as most sacred, and married his daughter. He will be back with her presently, and something must then be done. I should be sorry to tax your inclinations in any way, especially as you have no love for the girl; but I ask you, as a great service to your father, will you marry her instead of me?"

"Certainly; with the greatest pleasure," burst out the son. "But will she consent, or will Dr. Bibber?"

"Dr. and Miss Bibber!" announced the footman.

The Doctor had an air of victory on his face, and a still greater air of importance. The young lady looked submissive, but under that was a concealed smile of determination, which, could the Doctor have read it, would have given him a new idea or two.

"Mr. Carter," he began, "my daughter has consented to me, and I have brought her here that she may give you an affirmative answer. You will be pleased to ask her, or you know the alternative."

"Dr. Bibber, allow me a word. If the young lady will step into the drawing-room for a few minutes—"

"Any thing you have to say, sir, must be in her presence. When your son came to speak to her on business, he did so in my presence. If you wish to speak to me, therefore, it is only fair she should be present."

"As you will, Dr. Bibber. I have, I hope, discovered a way of reconciling the matter satisfactory to myself,—I hope it will be to you. Your daughter is far younger than I am, and a union between us might

be—pray do not interrupt me—attended with unpleasant consequences. If I provide her a husband; my son has, in the most generous manner, undertaken to marry her, if that suits her and you.”

The determination vanished at once from the young lady’s face. The Doctor thought, and did not hit on any objection.

“If my daughter has no objection,” he said, “I will give my consent; but under certain conditions. What do you say, Carry?”

She said nothing, at which Dr. Bibber was dismayed and Mr. Carter reassured.

“Go and ask her,” he said to his son, who was close to her in a moment.

“Miss Bibber, may I hope you will consent to settle the quarrel?”

He got an answer; I did not hear what, it was said so low; but she disengaged her arm from her father’s, and walked aside with Tom, while Dr. Bibber went to Mr. Carter and shook his hand warmly. Then, in two different parts of the room, these two dialogues took place,—

“Did you intend to accept my father?”

“I could not refuse mine, because he never let me speak; but if your father had asked me, I intended to have said ‘No,’ and that would have been too public for my father to have gone any further.”

“How kind of you to settle the quarrel so!”

“Kind?”

“Yes; don’t you know? I have loved you all the time.”

“Oh!”

“But it must be distinctly understood that your son marries her, not of himself, but in your place—in *loco parentis*.”

“Certainly; just as you like. About the settlement—”

“Oh, we needn’t trouble ourselves about business details now. Your lawyer and mine—we have the same, though, have we not?—shall draw up the contract under our direction. But I shall require that it is inserted that he marries her simply and solely in *loco parentis*, or you will have to marry her yourself.”

The Bibbers gained a victory and a defeat. The young lady did not tell her *fiancé* that she had loved him too, which was the victory; and the stipulated clause was at last left out of the contract, which was the defeat.

After Three Days.

ON MR. HOLMAN HUNT'S PICTURE, "CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE."

I stood within the gate
 Of a great temple, 'midst the living stream
 Of worshipers that thronged its regal state,
 Fair pictured in my dream.

Jewels and gold were there;
 And floors of marble lent their crystal sheen
 To body forth, as in a lower air,
 The wonders of the scene.

Such wild and lavish grace
 Had whispers in it of a coming doom;
 As richest flowers lie strewn about the face
 Of her that waits the tomb.

The sages of the land
 Had gathered there, three solemn trysting days,
 For high debate: men stood on either hand
 To listen and to gaze.

The aged brows were bent,
 Bent with a frown, half thought, and half annoy
 That all their stores of subtlest argument
 Were baffled by a boy.

In each averted face
 I read but scorn and loathing, till mine eyes
 Fell upon one that stirred not in his place,
 Tranced in a dumb surprise.

Surely within his mind
 Strange thoughts are born, until he doubts the lore
 Of those old men, blind leaders of the blind,
 Whose kingdom is no more.

Surely he sees afar—
 A day of death the stormy future brings:
 The crimson setting of the herald-star
 That led the Eastern kings.

Thus, as a sunless deep
 Mirrors the shining heights that crown the bay,
 So did my soul create anew in sleep
 The picture seen by day.

Gazers came and went;
 A busy hum of voices marked the spot,
 In varying shades of critic discontent,
 Prating they knew not what.

“Where is the comely limb,
 The form attuned in every perfect part,
 The beauty that we should desire in Him?”—
 Ah! fools and slow of heart,

Look into those deep eyes,
 Deep as the grave, and strong with love divine;
 Those tender, pure, and fathomless mysteries,
 That seem to pierce through thine;—

Look into those deep eyes,
 Stirred to unrest by breath of coming strife,
 Until a longing in thy soul arise
 That this indeed were life:

That thou couldst meet Him there,
 Bend at His sacred feet thy willing knee,
 And from thy heart pour out the passionate prayer,
 “Lord, let me follow Thee!”

* * * * *

But see!—the crowds divide;
 The lost is found; glad parents clasp their boy;
 The gentle voice, that fain would seem to chide,
 All trembling in its joy,

Thrills in the silence: “Son,
 How couldst Thou leave us thus? Our hungry gaze
 Hath yearned to rest on Thee, beloved One,
 Through all these weary days.”

And I had stayed to hear
 The loving words, “How is it that ye sought?”—
 But that the sudden lark, with matins clear,
 Severed the links of thought.

Then over all there fell
Shadow and silence, and my dream was fled,
As fade the phantoms of a wizard's cell
When the dark charm is said.

Yet, in the gathering light,
I lay with half-shut eyes that would not wake,
Lovingly clinging to the skirts of night
For that sweet vision's sake.

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